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VOL. XI.

THE CHILD AND RELIGION

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The
Child and Religion

Eleven Essays by

Prof. HENRY JONES, M.A., LL.D.; C. F. G. MASTERMAN, M.A.; Prof. GEORGE T. LADD, D.D., LL.D.; F. R. TENNANT, B.D., B.Sc.; Rev. J. CYNDDYLAN JONES, D.D.; Rev. Canon H. HENSLEY HENSON, B.D.; Rev. ROBERT F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.; Rev. G. HILL, M.A., D.D.; Rev. J. J. THORNTON; Rev. Rabbi A. A. GREEN; and Prof. JOSEPH AGAR BEET, D.D.

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The Child and Religion

INTRODUCTION

This book is the outcome of a friendly discussion, at a deacons' meeting, on the place of the child in the Christian Church. Several children had recently, as the result of attending services for young people, responded to the claims of the Saviour's love, and had expressed a desire to become His disciples. Now the question arose among the officers of the Church as to the proper attitude of the Church towards these children. Should they be admitted forthwith to the Lord's Table? Should they be enrolled as members of the Church without delay? Had they a right to Church privileges by virtue of their personal devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ? Ranging from eight to twelve years of age, were they too young to undertake the responsibilities of Church fellowship? Simple as these questions must appear, when they came to be considered in the light of Church tradition, custom, and administration, they soon grew into a complicated problem, and even series of problems. The matter was looked at from the points of view of parent, child, teacher, Church, and pastor, but was not settled to anybody's satisfaction at that meeting. A further inquiry became imperative. Our knowledge of New Testament teaching had to be revised; a wider survey of facts had to be taken, with the aid of Church history and modern research; a more accurate method of observation had to be adopted, for the purpose of eliminating propositions having only a limited scope, and discovering propositions of wide comprehensiveness, and having universal validity. In a word, principles and laws, at the root of the matter, and governing the whole situation, had to be found.

The aim of our later inquiry reached still further. Behind the question of the children's fitness for, and right to, Church status, lay the larger question of the spiritual union of the children with the Saviour; and behind that again were those undeveloped root-elements of their religious consciousness, and that general capacity for religion from which their religious faith must issue, and also the working of the Divine Spirit in the child's soul. In this difficult and obscure region, if at all possible, must our investigations be made. Profiting by the results of the psychologist's study of the child, we must try to look from the circumference into the centre of the child's soul, and also, placing ourselves at that centre, look out from it at the circumference of religious experience. This is no easy task, for religion is usually studied in adult life, and not in the life of the child. Here is a field almost unworked. In the Sunday School and in the pulpit the Christian faith has been interpreted to the child with success; but seldom has any attempt been made to elucidate the child's religious faith, or to understand religion with the help of the child's history and experience. The methods of science have scarcely ever been applied to this phenomenon of a child's religious consciousness. Psychology has led up to it, but has left it to be dealt with by theology and philosophy.

Published works on the subject are very few. Psychological essays written more particularly in the interests of educational theories we have in abundance; echoes of bygone controversies on Infant Communion, and Infant Baptism, we have also; but no serious attempt has yet been made in this country to reconcile theological thought on Infant Salvation with the established conclusions of modern science. To some extent, then, this work is a pioneer.

The original scheme for a book, or series of books, which should cover the whole ground, stood as follows:—

I. The Child and Heredity: a study in Biology.
II. The Child and Environment: a study in Sociology.
III. The Child's Capacity for Religion: a study in Psychology.
IV. The Child and Sin: a study in Theology.
V. The Child and the Saviour: a study in Soteriology.
VI. The Child and the Church: a study in Ecclesiology.

A volume might well have been devoted to each of these six sections; but practical considerations attending publication made it advisable to limit the extent of the work to a collection of short essays on these several themes. The original plan has been adhered to in the main, though a few modifications have become necessary.

It was clear enough that no one individual could be expected to write with fulness of knowledge, and to his own satisfaction, on so wide a range of topics, so the essays were entrusted to specialists who were known to be masters of their own subject. The chapters are representative in the sense that they stand for types of thought prevalent in the worlds of science and theology. Each writer has had a free hand, and is responsible for no other part of the book than that which he has himself written. Though the work is divided into separate sections, it is obvious that the subject cannot be arranged into so many air-tight compartments. A measure of inter-dependence and interaction is observable throughout, securing a degree of unity for the whole treatment.

Though the work appears at a time when the old controversy concerning the aims and methods of religious instruction in day schools is once more raging, it is just as well to say that our object has not been polemical. Theological and ecclesiastical disputations have not been prominently before the minds of the authors. They have sought rather to unfold those things which lie deeper than opposing opinions, and on which rests whatever of truth there may be in the varying contentions. The subject-matter of a few of the essays, however, is so inevitably connected with an actual situation that it would have been affectation to pretend to ignore the latter altogether.

The questions raised by the writers have more than a speculative interest. Here are some of those questions: "What has modern science to teach regarding the doctrine of heredity as applied to the human child?" "Have psychology, physiology, and biology any new light to give?" "What has sociology to teach about environment in relation to the religious consciousness of the child?" "Is religion a natural and normal product of a child's soul?" "Is a child bound to be religious by its constitution?" "Is there a latent capacity in every child for the Divine?" "Can we resolve a child's religious experience wholly into a matter of instinct, or of impulse, or of the 'Subliminal'?" "How does the doctrine of the Divine Immanence affect a child's religion?" "Does God's Spirit influence and instruct the child's spirit, even before the child can grasp the truth?" "Are all children born good?" "How does the child become sinful?" "What truth is there in the doctrine of 'original sin'?" "Is a child's nature sinful?" "Is the 'taint' of sin transmissible?" "Has the child, in infancy, any consciousness of sin?" "Are a child's evil tendencies simply the tendencies of the stock, derived from, and common with those of the brutes, and in themselves neither good nor bad, but only non-moral?" "When do a child's actions become moral?" "Does a child bear the image of God?" "How has the Fall affected that image?" "Is conversion necessary to regeneration?" "Are children born in the kingdom of God?" "Can children grow up into maturity within the kingdom without ever being consciously alienated from God?" "How is baptism related to the child's regeneration?" "Is the Catechetical method of teaching religious truth the right one?" "How should the Bible be used in the Day School and the Sunday School?" "How should parents teach religion to their children at home?"

These are fair samples of the questions raised by the writers and answered in these essays. With so many writers a diversity of views was to be expected. The points of agreement, however, far outnumber the points of divergence. The variations are principally on the surface, having to do with forms of expression. Deeper down there is harmony and concord. Doubtless, point of view is responsible for much apparent contradiction. Take, for example, the essays by Canon Henson and Dr Horton. It is obvious that the two authors are looking at much the same set of facts, but from a widely different standpoint. And yet they draw very near to each other in essentials. Or, take again the essays on "Sin" and "Conversion." Mr Tennant is a believer in the evolutionary theory, while Dr Jones is an orthodox Evangelical theologian with Calvinistic leanings. It is the object of the former to account for the "origin" of sin in the child, on scientific grounds, while the latter describes God's method of dealing with sin in the child. Both place stress on the *fact* of sin. Only, one speaks the language of physiology and biology, the other uses the terminology of theology and the Bible.

Is the child sinful by nature? Not only is the child guilty of sinful acts, but is the child by nature sinful? The theologians emphasise "original sin" in accounting for sin, while science speaks of "heredity" and "environment." There have been dogmatic developments of the theological idea which have had to be rejected. Theologians have exaggerated and elaborated, and so have made the thought repugnant. But still, the derived sinful bias of human nature is a fact, not a dogma. "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." Serious observers have recognised that the "taint" is transmitted. Only a superficial view of humanity, or an inadequate conception of morality can jauntily say that "all children are born good." The modern view of things is marked by an even stronger sense than in former days of the reality and universal presence of sin. The flimsy optimism which led men to regard this as the best of all worlds, and to make light of the facts which contradicted their pleasing hypothesis, has vanished. To-day there is even an oppressive sense of the weight of the sin which burdens humanity. We have disposed of the shallow views of Rousseau respecting the inherent goodness of children, and have ceased to dream of a perfectibility based on education, and on altered social and political conditions. Pelagian views of human nature are discredited. Kant's deeper and truer note is accepted, and we are forced to acknowledge the presence of a radical evil. The question with us to-day is not, "Is humanity sinful?" but, "How did sin penetrate into human nature?" "By the Fall (as the Bible teaches), or by the dominion of the brute element in man's being (as the evolutionary philosophy affirms)?" Much has yet to be said on this important point, both by science and theology. The essays of Professor Henry Jones, Professor Ladd, Mr Tennant, and Dr Cynddylan Jones, contain valuable suggestions towards an understanding of the real question at issue.

In these days, when Parliament is seriously discussing the case of underfed children in large towns and cities, and all the churches are taking to social work, Mr Masterman's exposition of the new environment and its bearing on character will be welcomed. As instruments for the extension of the kingdom of God on the earth, the churches will have to deal with phases of life that have not in the past come within the scope of their activities. A grand social ideal,—a redeemed world, where Jesus is the King universally obeyed, and where this obedience brings universal blessing—is gradually dawning on them.

This blessing includes physical well-being. Physical conditions go far to determine moral progress. The physical and the moral act and react on each other. So physical questions have a religious significance. When, for instance, we read that over-crowding produces an alarming increase in infantile mortality, we begin to realise that the fact has a moral as well as a physical meaning. Science and religion have their joint responsibilities and duties. Bodies no less than souls have their place in the kingdom of God. To save the soul is of supremest importance. But souls dwell in bodies. The object of the Saviour seems to be, not so much to fill heaven with saved souls, but to save souls and bodies for earth, as the best preparation for the heaven hereafter. This view has taken firm hold of the modern Churches and is widening their sympathies and operations. All human interests are regarded as component parts of the kingdom of God. The Gospel is seen to be essentially a social Gospel. It is for the individual primarily, but is not to stop there. We do the Gospel a grievous wrong by giving it merely an individualistic interpretation. A saved man becomes a saving agency. In no department of life may the beneficent influence of Christianity be of greater service to-day than in the home, in the preparation of an environment which shall help on the growth of Christian character in the children. Alas! how many houses there are which are no homes for the children.

It will be difficult perhaps to classify Mr Thornton's essay on the doctrine of Swedenborg; but it will have a value all its own. We cannot find a place for it among our accepted psychological and theological theories, but it contains suggestions as striking as they are unfamiliar.

Mr Green's message from Judaism will be read with the deepest interest, as will Dr Hill's statement of the attitude of the Baptists towards children, and Dr Beet's tribute to the Bible as THE BOOK for the child.

With many probably the "burning question" will be the child's status before God, and its need of conversion. This is referred to in several of the essays. The roots of many doctrines and practices are found here. The editor, with a view to giving further completeness to the book, has secured written opinions on the matter from representatives of many schools of thought. The first letter is from the Bishop of Durham, an Evangelical leader:—

Perhaps I may put thus the view that I think would be held by many of whom I am one.

(1) The "image of God," though broken by the Fall, and needing divine grace, absolutely, to restore it to its integrity, lies in every human child.

(2) Such, however, is the damage wrought by that deep mystery we call the Fall, so sore a break of continuity in the filial attitude does it bring, that Scripture seems plainly to speak of a *re*generation as necessary for every human being if it is to enjoy that sonship which is to be sonship indeed. It seems to me clear that the New Testament, in the vast majority of passages, when it speaks of "children of God" (and similar phrases), speaks of human beings who have been thus *re*generated.

(3) When and how this takes place is wholly another question. Conceivably the work may be wrought in unconscious infancy, *or* much later. It may evidence itself by the gentlest growth of grace from babyhood, *or* by a critical and intense conversion in consciousness. Evangelical churchmen as a rule do not connect it necessarily with the actual time of *baptism*, though they believe that baptism is related to it as God's seal upon God's deed and gift, impressed sometimes before the gift has been accepted and sometimes after.

(4) Conversion we should never narrowly, in our school, define. I often say that it is far less important to know when you crossed the frontier, and how you did it, than to be sure that *to-day you are on the right side.* But there is a sense in which we hold conversion to be always necessary, believing that fallen human nature, in the individual, has always (if I may put it so) its face selfward and away from God, apart from His changing grace. So that wherever man has his will toward God in Christ there *has been a* "*change round*" (*con-version*); at whatever rate and at whatever time it has taken place.

(5) All this theory meantime leaves us, I trust, quite free to exercise the most loving "judgment of charity" in every individual case. I would always assume the child of a Christian home to be actually as well as potentially a true child of God, a being who has met our heavenly Father's advance with heart and will, until I am compelled to think the contrary.

Generally, and little caring whether it seems perfectly logical, I recognise as scriptural the position that the race bears the image of God, though fatally broken, and that from that point of view we may speak of a filial aspect in every human being, *but* that the individual needs a regeneration if he is to be a child of God *in the sense emphasised* (and commonly in view) in the Bible.

Next comes the Hon. and Rev. J. G. Adderley, writing as a High-Churchman:—

I think all human beings are the sons of the All-Father God.

But sin has entered into the race and estranged them from the Father, so that the life of sonship may have ceased for all practical purposes. Christ, who is the son of God from all eternity, and has always lived personally in the attitude of sonship towards the Father, came out from heaven and took human nature. In that human nature He manifested the true life of sonship, that all men might see and know what the true life is when lived in complete obedience to the will of God. More than this, He gave men the right to become the sons of God in Him. He provided an antidote for sin and enabled men to rise to a true recognition of and realisation of true sonship, which sin had thwarted and vitiated.

In His parable of the prodigal son He spoke of the return to the Father as a coming to one's true self.

The Atonement was effected by Christ's real life of obedience unto death, by which He representatively on behalf of all men made the true Godward approach. By grace, that is, union with Himself, He takes our humanity up with His own and presents us to the Father. The Father accepted Christ as the Son in whom He is well pleased, and He accepts us by virtue of our union or association with the Christ life of perfect obedience. He looks on us lost men as found in Christ. He justifies us and we have peace with Him in Christ. Our lives are brought once more into harmony with God; we become in very truth His sons; by the Spirit, that is, by the union with the Christ life effected by the work of the Holy Ghost in us, we are able to cry, Abba, Father, and to live as God's sons.

Baptism is the normal way by which each human life is taken into union with Christ and incorporated into the family of God in very truth, and registered as subjects to God in the kingdom of Heaven.

But the germ of living sonship may remain, and very often does remain, unfructified. There is needed faith on the part of the baptized and a converted will that acts in union with the Divine will. If there be this the life of sonship prevails over the deadly desire of the "flesh," which is human nature trying to live apart from the Father.

A little child has all the elements of perfect sonship in him. He is the "greatest in the kingdom of Heaven." His pure life is like a clean slate upon which the true life can be written. A man must get back to that pure state and begin afresh if, having wandered, he would come back to the kingdom, or be restored to the full enjoyment of the family life of Heaven. The Church of England takes every child and baptizes him in the Name of God, assures him that he is thereby claimed for Christ, united to His perfect humanity, enfolded in the Father's family, incorporated in the kingdom. He is told that he belongs to God, that he is in a "state of salvation," that is, he is where, if he remains, he will certainly be delivered from all taint of sin and able to live the life of a free and healthy son of God.

If, in spite of this, through the wiles of evil spirit, the allurements of the world and the lust of the flesh, he wanders, the Church in the name of Christ bids him turn and be converted, surrender his will to God, accept the saving, delivering power of Jesus, and join the family circle once more to live in freedom and peace.

I think the teaching of our Catechism is designed to make children feel that they need not sin at all. They are encouraged to feel themselves the children of God. At the same time they are warned against the dangers of the world, the flesh, and the devil. But these they have renounced—they have nothing to do with them as such.

Just as they need not have cholera if they keep clean, so they need not sin. If, however, they do sin, then they are bidden to repent and turn. If they have shifted the centre of their being from God to self, then they must once more re-establish God on the throne of their hearts.

Children are to enjoy life. Christian children are to revel in the happiness of the heavenly home circle. They are to be the healthy-minded ones, brimming over with the exuberance of their fresh lives in Christ, about their Father's business, in their Father's house. Outside in the world there is danger, there are men and women, even boys and girls, who are living their lives apart from the Father; but this is death, not life, this is moral sickness, not health. Let them keep away from the infection. Let them go in and out and find pasture in the fold of the Good Shepherd. He will carry the lambs in His arms.

Conversion is not necessary for those who are living the converted life, and all who are in Christ and have not torn themselves away from His keeping are living that converted life—the life of wills that work in union with God's will, the Christ life, the life of the sons of God, whether little sons or big sons.

Professor James Orr, D.D., of the Presbyterian Church, says:—

(1) The Presbyterian Church believes in the need of spiritual regeneration for *all*—children included.

(2) Regeneration *may* be from the womb, and so may be an element in consciousness from the first.

(3) The only *test* of real regeneration is the turning of the heart (affections and will) to God.

(4) Even in the case of a child which has been the subject of Divine grace from infancy there is usually (though the process *may* be gradual and less sensible) a time of crisis or of conscious realisation and decision for Christ.

(5) Believing parents are certainly entitled to plead the covenant promises of God for their children, but His grace is no way confined to such children. In many ways otherwise the children of unbelieving parents are at enormous disadvantage (training, example, home influences, etc.).

Rev. John Watson, D.D. (Ian Maclaren), also of the Presbyterian Church, writes:—

With reference to your questions, I hold that a child may be born into the kingdom of God when it is born into the world, and grow up within God's family, as did Jeremiah and John Baptist. I also hold that the conscious crisis called conversion is not necessary to regeneration, for the opposite would mean that everyone had to go astray and be brought back to God at a distinct point in his life, which is not the case.

The next letter is from Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, M.A., a representative Wesleyan.

Writing of the ministers of his church, he says:—

> The more characteristic view would, I think, be that a child "may grow to maturity," as you say, "entirely within the kingdom of God." But there might be some who would urge the doctrine of conversion to the point of practically excluding the unconverted person from the kingdom of God. The more thoughtful would hold the belief that the child grows up within the kingdom of God without abandoning a pronounced view as to the need of conversion. They would hold, I think, that the operation upon the heart of the spiritual influences which lead to conversion show that the person influenced by them is already in a very real sense within the kingdom of God, where these influences operate. At the same time they would urge that this very fact leads to the necessity and supplies the power of a conscious and deliberate surrender to Christ, including both penitence and faith.

Principal Forsyth, D.D., of the Hackney College (Congregational), gives briefly his views:—

> I can only say in brief that the position held by most Congregationalists would be that children are born into a redeemed world and so far are members of the kingdom. If brought up under true Christian in-

fluences the conversion required may be gradual, unconscious, and imperceptible, but as those Christian influences, especially in the home, seem to be declining, the need for palpable conversion becomes more clear.

Rev. R. J. Campbell, M.A., City Temple (Congregationalist), answers our inquiry thus :—

Though great differences of opinion exist in the Nonconformist Churches on the subject of the child and religion, I believe that most of the members of my denomination would answer your questions thus :—

(1) Is the child born in the kingdom ? Yes.

(2) Is conversion necessary to make it a child of God ? No.

(3) Are all children in a state of favour with God? Yes.

(4) Are all unconverted outside the kingdom ? The answer to this question depends upon the moral consciousness of the child.

(5) May they grow up within the kingdom without consciously being alienated from God ? Yes. Many thousands do so. Their spiritual history is a development rather than a revolution.

Rev. Owen Thomas, M.A. (Congregationalist), writes :—

(1) Is the child born in the kingdom ? Yes. Christ claims the children as He has redeemed them.

(2) Is conversion necessary to make it a child of God? Yes, but it need not be sudden or revolutionary, but, as in most cases, gradual and unconscious.

(3) Are all children in a state of favour with God? Yes.

(4) Are all unconverted outside the kingdom? No.

(5) May they grow up within the kingdom without being consciously alienated from God? Yes.

Rev. John Lewis (Baptist), says:—

The question, "Are children born in the kingdom?" is best answered, it seems to me, by first remembering that the kingdom is essentially free, *i.e.* a body of those who, belonging to a rebel race, by an act of their own will, have voluntarily entered on the service of the King. From this point of view I cannot see how anyone can be in the kingdom until he is old enough to exercise his own choice, and has by an act of faith and love surrendered to Christ. I believe this choice, which from the human side we call conversion, is possible at a very early age, and often takes place before the subject of it is fully conscious of everything that has happened. It should be expected in very little children, who can often understand what sin is and what forgiveness means far better than many suppose, and should be regarded as the normal experience of child life in every household where the little ones are brought, not to any ceremony, but to the living Christ, in prayer and faith.

Rev. F. W. Stanley expresses the views of the Unitarians thus:—

> The child comes to our earth from the hand of God with a fresh mind and a pure heart, and evokes our reverence for the mystery and sanctity of life.
>
> The little one cannot be regarded as a child of wrath, for it has wonderful and fair capacities, and where all influences favour a righteous development, it may be led to admire and cleave to holy things.
>
> Though the child's nature is marked by simplicity and trustfulness, it does not at first evince the perfection it may ultimately attain, so that its life's work is to change defect into completeness.
>
> It is, however, impossible for us to be blind to the differences of human inheritance. The child, born of a line of saintly men, probably has predispositions to virtue and aspiration, which are wanting in the offspring of the sensual and abandoned. These differences are mysterious and of very solemn moment, for sometimes opposing forces seem almost too strong for the struggling will. And then the upward look is diverted by the enticements of the common world, and base and mundane things absorb, or lead astray.
>
> God touches the spirit and awakens it, or recalls it.
>
> It is the power of God that progressively awakens in us ideas and ideals, which lift us above selfishness and sensuality, and by their attractive beauty, and by their

felt authority prompt us and help us to ascend to a purer and higher life. This inspiration and help come to us from the free grace of the Father within us; and it is our part not to resist, but to yield ourselves to these Divine influences, which are kindled by God's love, and which, if followed, bring us into closer intimacy with Him.

Our inheritance embraces the treasure that has come from Jesus and the saints of the generations; we are akin to Him, and we should all be able to enter into the blessing that has been set before us. In some measure we should all strive to attain.

Religious lives may be, and have been lived away from Jesus, but we find in His bequest to the Western world all that seems highest in our conception, and that most commends itself to our conscience in love and service. Apart from His exemplification of the Divine will, we appear unable to reach that which we are constrained to account most holy.

The diversity of views expressed above will convince many how needful is an honest revision of doctrine on the whole subject of Child Salvation. A readiness to receive into fellowship disciples of tender years is getting more common in all the churches. Baptists immerse quite young children, on evidence of faith in Christ; others who baptize infants are putting greater stress on the need of regeneration even in the youngest. It may have been true at one time (as Canon Henson alleges) that Nonconformists neglected that period in childhood from infancy to the time of conversion, as though they were not expected to do anything for their children's salvation until by the grace of God the children were converted. The Canon's charge is not true of present-day Nonconformity. The numerous Nonconformist Sunday Schools disprove it. Most Nonconformists would accept the motto: "All the Church in the School, and all the School in the Church." This points to the need of a more frank recognition of the child's rights.

All will agree with Dr Horton's strong plea for more religious training in the home. Modern life offers many difficulties on this score. Fathers are away from home so much and see so little of their children. In large towns and cities home, in many thousands of instances, is for the father but a place for bed and break-fast. Family life is being sacrificed to the exigencies of business life. In tenements and similar places called homes, thousands are denied the privacy of a true home. Who is to train these children in religion? The Sunday School teacher? We are very thankful for splendid service rendered by Sunday Schools. But that is not enough. Should not the Day School also help? The best heart of Britain says: "The Child for Religion, and Religion for the child." Are we to believe that Canon Henson's readiness to accept *The Free Church Catechism* as a basis of an unsectarian religious education in Day Schools represents the attitude of the bulk of the clergy? If that is so, the solution of our present difficulty is not far to seek. We desire to have for the child a Christian atmosphere alike in the home, the school, and the church. A "secular" education from which all religious "tone" is excluded is an infliction from which we would save our children. The "secular" is true only as it is religious. Surely there is a *via media* between the extremes of the controversy. The Canon's philosophical explanation of the teaching of the orthodox Church is admirable, but it is different from that which we actually meet with in the parishes of England. Hence all the trouble. If all the clergy agreed with him, the course would be clear. The Nonconformists are more at one with him than he thinks. The "undenominationalism" he condemns is certainly not that for which Nonconformists contend. Again, let us say that we believe we have in Canon Henson's essay a suggested middle course which might well lead to a reconciliation of earnest men on both sides of the dispute.

Is the Catechetical method of teaching religion to be commended? First the concrete, then the abstract, that is the modern way of general education. Should the theory be applied to religious education? The Established Church and some Free Churches cling to a Catechism. The impatience shown to the systematising of religious facts and truths is in the judgment of many unwise. The ideal way is a true blending of the inductive and deductive methods. The day of the Catechism is not yet over.

It remains, in a closing word, to thank the writers of the letters from which I have quoted, and Rev. J. G. James, M.A., Litt. D.; Rev. E. W. Lewis, M.A., B.D.; and Rev. W. Oliver, M.A., for valuable assistance willingly rendered.

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I

THE CHILD AND HEREDITY

"A MAN is what he is at any period of life, first, by virtue of the original qualities which he has received from his ancestors, and, secondly, by virtue of the modifications which have been effected in his original nature by the influence of education and of the conditions of life. But what a complex composition of causes and conditions do these simple statements import!"[1] The task of determining what it is precisely which is inherited in any particular form of life, and how far and in what ways the original inheritance may be enriched or impoverished, continued in its first tendency or diverted therefrom, constitutes the main enterprise of modern biology. And it has proved so difficult that, after many years of inquiry and discussion, biologists have hardly succeeded in laying down even general principles which they would agree in regarding as open to no further doubt.

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[1] Dr Maudsley's *Pathology of Mind*, p. 87.

But the problem of the nature and relative significance of inherited qualities and the influence of surroundings, with which the biologist deals, is simple as compared with that which is raised by these facts for the psychologist, the metaphysician, and the moral philosopher. For these latter have to deal with the nature and the interaction of these factors within the realm of consciousness ; and consciousness, however we may account for it, is a fact which must not only be acknowledged, but acknowledged as complicating the issues, and indefinitely deepening their importance. We may derive consciousness from natural conditions after the manner of the Materialist, or we may attribute to it some more mysterious origin ; or we may even hesitate to seek for its origin at all, and take it as a given and unique datum : in all cases alike it retains its own character and its own functions. These functions are what they are, whatever their history, and the problem of their nature remains the same, however they be derived. Is consciousness nothing but a mirror in which man's physical activities are reflected, so that he not only lives, but carries with him a record of his life ? Or is it something more than a passive mirror, and does the record which consciousness keeps of its life and its activities change that life and those activities, and react upon its inherited and environing constituents, so as to give them a new meaning and efficacy, and a place within a higher order of being which we call rational or spiritual ?

On the answer that is given to these questions depends the whole meaning of heredity and of circumstance for man as a rational being. And upon the meaning that is given to heredity and circumstance depends, in turn, the very possibility of his having a rational life, with its characteristic cognitive, moral, and religious activities.

That hereditary conditions and the influence of environment somehow, and to some degree, affect human character no one will deny. But the significance of the admission is rarely seen. As a rule, the question is reduced into that of the degree or extent to which these natural elements enter into human life. For it is considered that, to make the character depend *wholly* upon these two elements, to regard it *simply* as the product of these two factors, is to deprive character of all moral or spiritual meaning. For it is evident that moral character must be made by each individual for himself; that it must be the expression and manifestation of the self; and that the self disappears if it be analysed into hereditary and environing elements in their interaction.

Consequently we find the apologist of man's spiritual or moral nature endeavouring, by means of various devices, to retain something for man, as rational, which exists over and above these natural factors. He has a will which is not inherited and not ruled by circumstance, or he has a self which is greater even than its own content. "The Ego is something more than the aggregate of feelings and ideas, actual and nascent." These and their natural antecedents do not exhaust the Ego or give a complete account of all its actual and possible phenomena. When I am told, "You *are* your own phenomena," I reply: "No; I *have* my own phenomena, and so far as they are active it is I that make them, and not they that make me."[1] The self is something more than character even. There is in it a transcendental element which character can at no moment wholly express or embody. It is a noumenon amongst phenomena, and belongs in the last resort to another order of being than these latter.

But the problem of man's rational and

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[1] See Martineau's *Types of Ethical Theory*, II. chap. i.

moral life cannot be solved in this way, nor the meaning of heredity and environment as applied to mankind be made plain. For the question is not a question of the degree in which the natural, inherited, or external elements enter into his life; but of the manner in which they enter. It matters nothing where we draw the line that distinguishes the self from the not-self, or the man from that which is before or outside of him: we may draw it between the transcendental self and the empirical self; between the self as knowing and the self as object of knowledge; between the self as noumenon and the self as phenomenon; between the self and the character; between the self and the feelings, thoughts, and volitions which are the content of character; or between the self and the physical conditions which antecede or environ it. The result is still the same. The self that we thus isolate is empty and impotent; and *the man as a whole*, whose nature is, after all, the object of discussion, is represented as a compound of extraneous and mutually repellent elements which is in theory unintelligible, and in practice powerless for either good or evil. The natural and the spiritual cannot at the same time cooperate and retain their mutually exclusive characteristics.

It is for these reasons that the problem of heredity assumes in the realm of psychology and ethics a different character from that which it has in that of biology. Biology could at best give only the natural history of man, and either his *natural* history is not his whole, or even his true history, or else his morality and religion are nothing but illusions. Either he is not the result of the action of a merely 'natural' environment upon an inherited disposition, and the process of merely natural evolution does not account for him in his real inward being at all, or else his spontaneity and freedom and the moral life which springs therefrom are mere appearances. Slowly and reluctantly, but inevitably, it seems to me, the philosophers of the present time, and especially those who are idealistic in temper and who therefore will not easily let go the spiritual nature of man, are driven to choose between the naturalistic or materialistic interpretation of man on the one hand, and the spiritual interpretation of him on the other. The method of compromise, that is, of regarding man as partly natural and partly spiritual, as from one point of view a noumenon, and from another a phenomenon, as a mere subject in some respects and a mere object in others, is breaking down. It is gradually realised that both the natural and the spiritual method of explaining man claim him *as a whole.* Either his inmost self must fall within the natural scheme, or else that natural scheme itself must have spiritual significance. Spirit by its very nature is jealous and can brook no rival. It must be all, if it is at all. The deepest of all differences must fall within its unity with itself. Man must lapse back into nature, or he must raise nature to his own level as spiritual.

But the choice is hard, and both alternatives are difficult. It is hard to see in what way nature can be spiritualised without evaporating it into mere forms of the human consciousness; and it is not less hard for those who endeavour to look at the facts of human life as a whole to acquiesce in the reduction of morality and religion into natural things disguised as spirit. On the other hand, the ways of dualism and Agnosticism are easy. It is easy to make the realms of nature and of spirit into closed and exclusive systems, or into different orders of being, so that natural law terminates, and spiritual law begins at a certain point. And it is easy to postulate some unity behind nature and spirit, and to conceal their difference by making them aspects of it, or to bring in some unknowable reconciliation of them in an Absolute which surpasses knowledge. It is easier still to seek to establish man in an unexpugnable ignorance of all true being; to prove that his science never penetrates behind appear-

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ances to the real, and is full of unverified hypotheses, which can be riddled by metaphysics; and to show that morality and religion have even less rational cogency, unless we are permitted to base them upon the dogmatism of authority, or intuition, or faith.

All these methods have been attempted by the different philosophical schools of the day. But none of them has proved satisfactory or brought rest. The natural predetermination of the child, whether through heredity, or through the power over him of external circumstance, remains to threaten his spiritual nature. Nor does it matter on which of these two the accent is thrown; the ideas of the fixity of inherited character in the child and of its being plastic to environment are both alike fatal to a free and rational life. The possibility of moral character, which must be of the individual's own acquisition, is destroyed in both cases; and the very conception of individual improvement and social reform is stultified. Nor is it clear, at least at first sight, in what way the operation of the two forces together can amount to anything better than a double enslavement; or how the child can be regarded otherwise than as the victim both of heredity and of physical and social environment, as of two colliding necessities.

And yet it is this latter condition that seems to be presented to us as a fact. That is to say, the child seems to be under the dominion of both. He comes into the world with powers inborn, and in great part unalterable. The whole force of circumstance can only assist him to become what, in a manner, he already is. His intercourse with the world "alters it so little and so unessentially, that we have a right to say that he remains the same." And yet, on the other hand, the influence of the environment is so great as to count for well-nigh all. Apart from it, his powers remain unrealised, for the environment is the very material out of which his character is fashioned. It determines which of his powers are stimulated and actualised, and which are atrophied and left dormant; and, apparently also, whether they shall be directed towards vice or virtue.

Owing to this double aspect of human life much confusion has ensued both in theory and practice, and we find those who are engaged either in the education of the child or in social reform involved in an endless and apparently futile discussion as to the relative significance of the inner and outer conditions of character. The emphasis is laid upon heredity and environment, or shifted from the one to the other, according to the purpose or need of the moment. From the first point of view we find it maintained that a child may inherit from vicious or dissolute parents a disposition to evil. It matters not, we are told, what influences may be brought to bear upon it, sooner or later the original strain will manifest itself in act. The vicious life breaks out in due time almost as surely as oak leaves upon an oak tree. And so strong is this conviction, so fully does it seem to be maintained by evidence gathered from all quarters of the animal kingdom, that it has been a main obstacle in the way of one of the most desirable and promising of social reforms. I refer to the adoption as members of the family of the derelict waifs of the great cities. No one can deny that our sporadic and intermittent benevolences are futile for the purposes of the real moral education of such children ; or that the too remote care and cool affection spent upon the children in poorhouses and other charitable institutions lack the regenerating force of a virtuous home. Nor do I believe it possible to deny that in this country and these times, where the sense of pity and of social responsibility is so much quickened, adoption might not be more general than at any other time in the history of the world. But the fear of hereditary predisposition paralyses the benevolent, and paralyses them the more, the more they place value upon character. They cannot face the risk of twining their affections around children who may have brought with them into the world the tendencies which destroyed their parents.

Nevertheless, in other departments of personal and social reform the accent is laid upon the environment, as if heredity signified but little. Nearly all the more important public reforms are advocated from this point of view. Let but the institutions of society be changed, and it is believed all else will follow in due course. Moral disease, thinks the socialist, will disappear under the new external conditions over which he dreams, as surely (though perhaps more slowly) as physical diseases tend to disappear with better sanitation. Nor does this view lack evidence to support it. There is no denying the significance of environment in moral matters, any more than in physical.

Not only are the influence of environment and the significance of heredity alternately accentuated and minimised, but these two factors of character are held to be opposed to each other. For it seems too evident to admit of dispute that the more the child brings with it into the world through the hereditary transmission of its parents' qualities, the less can external environment affect it for evil or good; and, *vice versa*, that the more there lies in the power of outward circumstance the less the significance of the inherited qualities. And it is this supposed opposition which has led to the persistent and apparently hopeless effort to determine the limits of their respective influences upon child life. What practical reformer would not prize highly the discovery of the line of compromise which would guide his endeavour and show what he may, and may not, attempt for the objects of his care?

On this account those who inquire into these matters with the dispassionate continuity of the scientific investigator listen with keen interest to the deliverances of biology in its comparatively simpler field. It is felt, in particular, that the controversy raised, especially by Weismann, as to the inheritance by the offspring of the *acquired* characteristics of the parent is of profound significance. That controversy is still so far from being settled that we are not entitled to regard any conclusion as certain. But I believe that upon the whole the direction in which competent opinion strongly tends is towards the denial of the inheritance of such *acquired* characters. It is very doubtful if new characters can be acquired at all. Probably, as Weismann says, "Every acquired character is simply the reaction of the organism upon a certain stimulus." "No organ can be originated by exercise," says another biologist, "though an existing organ may be developed to its maximum." . . . And even, "granting that there are such things as acquired characteristics, the evidence of their transmission is unreliable."[1]

But if biological evidence tends towards denying the inheritance of *acquired* characters, it is not to be assumed that it also tends to minimise the significance of heredity. On the contrary, those who are the most strenuous in denying that acquired modifications of the parental structure can be transmitted to the offspring make the largest claims for the inheritance of other characters. Heredity, they think, can be explained only on the theory of the germ-plasm; and the theory of the germ-plasm implies, in the last resort, not only that life is continuous but that from the first it contains, in some way, the tendency towards the variations which reveal themselves in the successive stages of animal life. Outward environment only elicits or restrains, stimulates or represses, what is already present; but it can add nothing that is new.

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[1] Headley's *Problems of Evolution*, p. 67.

When it appears to cause a change in an organism, closer investigation shows that it furnishes only the occasion by reference to which the living thing changes itself. "A green frog, if he is not among green leaves, but amid dull, colourless surroundings, ceases to be bright green, and becomes a sombre grey. Put him among foliage again and his green soon returns. It cannot be said that the green foliage has caused his colour to change. It is more correct to say that he has the power of changing his colour to suit his environment. If the frog happens to be blind, no change of colour takes place; so that it is by the help of the eye and the nervous system that the change is effected."[1] The power of reaction must be present. "In fact an external condition can do nothing but bring to light some latent quality"; or, as Weismann puts it, "Nothing can arise in an organism unless the predisposition to it is pre-existent, for every acquired character is simply the reaction of the organism upon a certain stimulus."[2] Thus the denial of the inheritance of *acquired* qualities and the assertion of the inheritance of all other characteristics go hand in hand.

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[1] Headley's *Problems of Evolution*, p. 49. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

They are both consequences of the view that the environment can only furnish the *occasion*, *i.e.* the incentive and means of organic development.

Now, this view of the significance of heredity and of the subordinate, though necessary, *rôle* of the environment carries with it most important consequences for the study of the child and the conditions of his development. The first of these, it is manifest, is that if we accept this theory in its full extent, we must conclude that, at least so far as his organic structure is concerned, the human being must be regarded as in some manner latently or potentially present even in the very lowest form of animal life. Biologists do not hesitate to draw this conclusion. "In the lowest known organism, in which not even a nucleus can be seen, is found potentially all that makes the world varied and beautiful."[1] More strictly, perhaps, biologists *seek* to find it, proceed on the hypothesis that it is there, and are engaged in discovering the conditions and manner of its presence.

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[1] Headley's *Problems of Evolution*, p. 39.

But structure and function go together and, so far as the general observation of animal life shows, develop *pari passu* at all its stages. And if it be true that the promise of the human structure is latent in the lowest organism, it would seem that the promise of its functions lies there likewise. No doubt we must distinguish between the psychical and the physical. However they are related they cannot be identified. But that does not prevent us from regarding both as developed forms of the lowest life, the one on the side of its functions and the other on the side of their physical condition. Indeed we must derive both or neither, unless we are prepared to destroy all intelligible correlation between what an organism does and what it is. Hence it follows that the mental powers of man are brought within the sweep of natural evolution; and the child is determined at birth—to go no further—as a rational not less than as a physical being.

No doubt, as in other cases, the environment, or, as we may say in this context, *experience* may furnish the means of modifying the inherited powers, but it cannot initiate. The child can become only what it was potentially at the first.

Now, at first sight, this hypothesis seems fatal to the possibilities of ethics and religion and all the higher interests of man; and to limit greatly the range within which the child can be educated. It is not without reason that, as we have seen, the apologists of man's spiritual life have recoiled from this doctrine, and have sought to endow man with some power or other which stood free from this chain of necessary causation, or endeavoured to discredit the deliverances of natural science as hypothetical and sought refuge in faith, based upon ignorance. But the first of these methods is certainly doomed to fail. Its very success brings failure. For precisely in the degree to which the self-conscious ego is withdrawn from real connection with the world, in which it is placed in order to realise itself, does that realisation become unintelligible. We cannot afford to deny or mystify man's intercourse with the world, by interaction with which his powers are evolved; and intercourse is impossible if there is no real or ontological relation between these factors. And as to the second method, even while admitting that this doctrine of evolution is only a hypothesis, and that even the surest deliverances of natural science are only in process of being proved, I should consider the tenure of our moral and religious beliefs very insecure if they could be held only on the condition of discrediting natural science.

Rather than avail ourselves of either of these methods, let us seek to discover what consequences really do follow if we accept this doctrine of evolution and heredity as true. I believe it possible that in this doctrine, rightly understood, there may be found the best defence of man's spiritual interests. The importance of the issue justifies close inquiry.

In the first place, then, it is to be noticed that the result of this view is not to naturalise man, but to rationalise his antecedents.

For this doctrine does not assimilate man to his animal progenitors, but his animal progenitors to man. It does not strip man of his powers, but endows the lower animal creation with the promise of them, asserting that they exist from the first potentially. Evolution thus comes to mean what idealistic philosophers have maintained that it is, namely, a process of levelling upwards, and not of levelling downwards. Man is not made the poorer by the enrichment of his animal ancestors. His conscious life retains its characters even although it should be proved that the crude promise of it lies in simple organisms. Hence those who believe that man's nature is essentially rational or spiritual can abide this biological issue not only without concern but with the assurance that if it be true it makes the world mean more and not less, brings it closer to man and even makes it share, in its way, in his rational enterprise.

Within the sphere of human psychology this conception of the higher as implicit in the lower favours man's ethical and spiritual interests still more clearly. Psychologists have been divided in opinion on this question of evolution and heredity in a way closely analogous to the biologists. And amongst them also the tendency, on the whole, has been towards assimilating the lower to the higher, or towards levelling upwards. But nothing beyond a "tendency" in this direction can be asserted thus far. For there are many philosophers who, in their metaphysical speculations, at least, proceed on the older hypothesis. By implication, if not by direct assertion, they treat sensation, perception, conception, and the higher powers of reason as if they appeared *successively;* and the child during his development is made to pass from a perceptual and individual form of experience into a conceptual or universal form, which latter is alone rational in the proper sense of the term. And most important issues follow from this view. Amongst them are the limitation of the operations of the higher faculties to the formal re-arrangement of the data of sense; and the condemnation of science and philosophy to the task of restating, in a more abstract and general form, the truths already obtained in perception. The progress of knowledge, on this view, is the self-stultifying movement from the concrete to the abstract, from particulars rich in content to universals that are formal and empty. And, above all, the higher is made dependent upon the lower, and man's activities, in the last resort, are represented as sensuously determined. Many therefore and various are the devices to which recourse has to be made, in order to save man's rational interests threatened by this hypothesis. As man's life rests upon perceptions and perceptions upon impressions, impressions and perceptions of another kind than those which lead to cognition are postulated on behalf of his higher interests. Art, morality, and religion are said to have their own special and peculiar sensible data, and the conceptions proper to them are derived from these data by generalisation and attenuation. There are unique æsthetic perceptions for the consciousness of beauty, unique moral perceptions for the consciousness of goodness, and unique supersensible impressions to furnish the data for religion. It is not observed that this method re-introduces the discredited doctrine of separate faculties, and loses "man" in his parts and divisions; far less is it observed that beauty, truth, and goodness imply each other and cannot thus be held apart.

But the more consistent idealist postulates the presence of the higher faculties in the lower. He finds sense to be implicit reason, and ordinary knowledge to be implicit science. The progress of knowledge is for him a process of concretion and not of abstraction, of articulation and not of mere generalisation. The higher contains the truth of the lower in a fuller form; sense is carried up into perception, and perception into thought. And hence the higher is not determined by the lower, but is the fulfilment of its own promise within it; and the nisus of the whole process is within itself.

So far, then, there can be no doubt that this conception of evolution, both in its biological and in its psychical applications, contains no threat against the higher life of man. It lifts him above external necessitation by placing the impulse and direction of his evolution within himself. He is not product but producer, not consequence but cause. He himself is present, although only implicitly, in his antecedents; and while external conditions stimulate, he is determined to action only by himself.

But, it will be asked, does not the necessitation remain? According to this view, are not the future of the child, and his character as man, determined for him? Is not hereditary determination *fatal* determination? What can education, or aught else that the physical and social environment can bring, do for him, except simply make him what he already is? Have we not denied not only the transmission of acquired characters, but the possibility of acquiring anything that is really new?

I reply that no answer except a fatalistic one is possible to these questions if we start from the ordinary presupposition, to which I have already alluded, namely, that the more we attribute to heredity the less we can attribute to the environment; or that in taking the child from the power of the one we place him under the power of the other. If heredity and environment are thus taken as opposed, or as acting singly, the possibility of that identity *in* change which the progressive attainment of rational character implies disappears. For the first means mere fixity, and the second mere change. The first denies the improvement of the self; the second dissipates the self.

But I should like to question this assumption of the opposition of heredity and environment, or of their alternate sway over human life. The fact is that life in all its activities implies their *interaction*. The child is never under the dominion of one of them to the exclusion of the other, for they signify nothing so long as they are held apart. Except for the environment his powers would remain potential only, and mere potentiality, whatever it means, is not actuality; and similarly, on the other hand, the mere environment has no significance, and its influence is not real where there are no powers that can utilise it. The entire meaning and power of both lies *in their relation*. They are what they are through mutual implication.

And, further, seeing that they enter as factors into organic life, the increase of the one does not imply the diminution of the other. On the contrary, the larger the inherited faculty, the greater the opportunities which any given environment brings. Where the inherited endowment is meagre, the environment can do little either to develop or to repress. And, relatively to his animal progenitors, it is because the hereditary powers of the child are so great that the nature of his environment is so important. You can swing a canary's cage in the most immoral surroundings without detriment to the bird; but to place the child there is to come nigh to making a calamitous result inevitable.

It is not to be considered, however, that the environment can be regarded as *causing* the character. Mere environment can obviously cause nothing; at the very most it is only one element or factor in the cause. Nay, if we keep close to the view of evolution which we have been discussing, it will be seen that the word "cause" is not appropriate in this context, and that the influence exerted by the environment is not "causal" in its character. For it does not determine the development of the child; it only furnishes the means for its *self*-determination. It can initiate no powers, and possibly it can *ultimately* destroy none; for the germ-plasm theory provides for the indestructibility of life and its potencies as well as for its continuity. What it can do, and does, is to provide the conditions under which particular powers of the individual may or may not be developed. And in this respect the importance of the part it plays cannot well be exaggerated. It is, I believe, as vain to expect the normal or right development of a child's rational nature in an unfavourable environment, as it is to expect the healthy growth of the body under unhealthy conditions. The dependence of the child's welfare upon the external factor of his well-being is complete, even although its dependence on the inner factor also is complete. Both are absolutely necessary conditions of his well-being, and they must be concurrent.

But it does not follow that they are of the same rank, or that we can regard them both equally as causes, or as exercising the same parts in the determination of the child's character. Both means and end are necessary to bring about a result, and nevertheless the means is subordinate to, as well as necessary for the realisation of the end. And such, on this view of evolution, is the relation between the inner and outer conditions of character. All that the environment can do, in the last resort, is to call the child's powers into activity, and furnish the means of their realisation. The direction and the final limits of his development are prescribed from within.

We must now endeavour to ascertain some of the results which flow from this conception of the relation of inborn character and environment. The first of these is that a fresh light is thrown upon the nature of the dependence of the child upon his surroundings. According to the view both of the determinists and the indeterminists, any kind of real or ontological connection between the child and the natural system into which he is born was regarded as an obstacle to his freedom, and therefore to his realisation of a life which can be called moral or spiritual. Hence the controversy between them turned upon the possibility of liberating him *from* this system. According to the doctrine we have endeavoured to explain, the outer world, so far from being an obstacle to his self-realisation, is the indispensable condition of it. The social and physical environment furnishes the whole content of his rational life. Hence the richer the world is in which he finds himself, the more constant its pressure upon him, and the more varied and more active its incitations, the more surely he attains what it is in him to be. The world is there in order to be possessed by his intelligent nature; and his intelligence grows just in the degree to which he enters upon this possession. It is there to call forth the active powers of his will, and his will grows in range and effectiveness with its reaction upon the world. He is set to realise his rational nature, not in spite of, but by means of his surroundings. And his dependence upon them, though as complete as the dependence of his body upon air and light and food and drink, is a dependence which ends in converting them into his own substance, and making them into constitutive elements of his power to think and act. It is isolation, and not connection, that implies impotence. It is the aloofness of a world whose meaning is not comprehended which brings bondage and compulsion. In the degree to which the self is free it possesses the world. It internalises it within the self; the self ideally comprises it and makes it the instrument of its will. In fact, this is the process by which the child develops towards the fulness of his stature. That is to say, his education is the opening out of his powers of converting that which originally was external to him into constituent elements of his self. When he has reached the stage at which his development ceases, one can say with much truth that all his environment is within him. To the degree in which the character has become fixed, whether in the ways of vice or of virtue, to that degree all the new forces which play upon him either leave him unaffected or simply re-inforce his existing tendencies. This is the reason why so little can be done to assist the adult wastrels; and why the very means of well-doing are turned by them into instruments of deeper corruption. Such is the power of character, once formed, over that which plays upon it, that, whether it be good or evil, it turns it into its own substance. And social reformers, as their experience grows, tend more and more to despair of doing anything real for the man, and to turn their forces of improvement more and more upon the child.

It follows in the next place that what a child inherits are not actual *tendencies* but potential *faculties*. Biologists sometimes speak as if it were possible for parents to transmit tendencies or propensities towards good or evil to their offspring; and we have already seen something of the way in which this conception has entered into the common belief and practice of our times. It arises from the direct application of natural categories to moral facts. Goodness is considered as a "variation," and as capable of transmission through inheritance, as if it were an organic structure. It is supposed to develop from age to age in a race,—"the race which has much of it having an advantage over that which has little." In short, it is made subject to ordinary evolution. Hence, in accordance with the germ-plasm theory, goodness should be present potentially in the lowest organism. "If goodness appeared in the world only in evolution's latest stage, we may nevertheless infer its existence before life began upon the earth. The Darwinian believes that no new power or faculty has been introduced from without, since the simplest form of life began the course of evolution that was to end in the most complex and highest. It is evident, then, that on this hypothesis, goodness existed potentially from the beginning, only waiting for the required circumstances to develop it."[1]

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[1] Headley's *Problems of Evolution*, p. 291.

In accordance with this view one would expect that what applies to goodness also applies to evil; and that it, too, is present in the lowest organism, persists and is developed from age to age. But apparently it is not so. The process of evolution is said to be one by which evil is being perpetually eliminated or subjugated, and evil cannot, therefore, be regarded as a primary principle.[1]

I shall not inquire whether the biologist is entitled thus to mete out a different measure to good and evil; for I cannot admit the transmission by inheritance of either of them. They are in their very nature incapable of it. For they are neither structures nor functions; neither organs nor faculties; and it is only with these that biological evolution deals. They are modes, qualities, or "values" of functions, and have no independent existence and cannot persist. They *are* only so long as they are being willed, or only so long as the will is active. We call a man good because we believe that his formed character will lead him from time to time to do good acts. The amount—if we could really speak of "amount"—of good and evil in the world at any moment is measured by the actual volition of what is right and wrong. Good and evil exist, whether in the individual or in the race, by constant re-creation, and they perish utterly with the acts which they characterise. Heredity, therefore, cannot touch them. Every man, *as moral*, is a new being. His history begins and ends with his will.

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[1] See *Problems of Evolution*, p. 293.

What does persist and might conceivably be transmitted is the modification set up in the individual's powers through the doing of right or wrong actions. For every action, mental or physical, recoils upon the faculty which has produced it. And it is possible thus that there may be an accumulation, not indeed of good or evil, but of propensities to perform the one or the other. And there is no doubt that this accumulation takes place within the life of the individual. The creation of "habit," which is one of the conditions of the acquirement of increased power of any kind, would be unintelligible, if the doing of acts left no trace upon the doer. But, if it be true that *acquired* characters are not transmitted, then even *tendencies* to good or evil cannot come by inheritance. No child is born vicious or virtuous. It is only by his own action that he can become the one or the other. He is not even pre-disposed to virtue or vice, unless, indeed, we identify the former with the innate impulse towards self-realisation, characteristic of all life. Not even the most unfortunate of human beings is born with a moral taint. What he inherits are powers, and these undeniably may vary both in a relative and in an absolute sense; so that the appeal of the environment may mean very different things to different children, and the education of the child into a virtuous manhood may be much more difficult in one case than in another. But that such education is more or less possible in the case of every rational being I must believe. The possession of a rational life implies it, or, rather, I should say that the possibility or potency of such a life implies it; for the possibility is turned into actuality, and the powers are realised only *in* their interaction with the environment.

The conclusion to which we are thus led, by our consideration of heredity in its relation to the child, is that *character* cannot be transmitted. The vital energy which passes from parent to child is variable in absolute quantity and in the relative strength of its constituents. And I do not believe that there is reasonable room for doubt that a degenerate parentage brings weakened offspring; or that, in this restricted and metaphorical sense, the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children. But in every other sense, except this of varying capacities awaiting realisation by actual contact with circumstance, each child is a new beginning; the way to virtue is as open to the child of the wicked as it is to the child of the virtuous. The whole stress, therefore, falls upon the environment, and above all else upon the *social* environment, into which from birth the child enters. And the essential element in that environment is not the precept but the practice of those into whose hands the care of the child falls. For not only does the child measure the significance of the precept by reference to the practical life, but it is this life which constitutes the constant, normal environment, the very air it draws in with every breath.

The question of surrounding the child with influences calculated to evolve its powers is thus of transcendent importance. From birth to death he acquires nothing except from his surroundings. Apart from the community, from *his* community, from the atmosphere of example and general custom which he apprehends and assimilates, he is but a blank possibility and an abstraction. His very self is social in its whole make and structure. His character, if it is necessarily all of his own making and the expression of his own inner rational life, is nevertheless wrought out of the active substance of the social habitudes that surround him; "its content implies in every fibre relations of community." The tongue he speaks is not more surely the language of his own people than are the ideas he forms, the sentiments he imbibes, and the habits he makes. Hence it follows that the best, nay, the only good education of the child, comes, as Pythagoras said, "by making him the citizen of a people with good institutions." What the limits of the inborn potentialities of a child may be no one can determine. There is a sense in which it is not possible to think too highly of his heritage. For is not reason in its very nature the counterpart of the realm of reality? And is not the world of things and men, the marvellous outer cosmos and the still more marvellous order of social life in all their inexhaustible variety of contact, there for him to assimilate and possess? But this inheritance, ideally so great, is in actual practice limited to the forces that immediately play around him. And, within the limited scope of his life on earth he cannot excel, except to a most exiguous degree, the actual life in which his lot is cast. He can rise but a little above his surroundings. The educative power of a community towards its own children is thus measured by the amount of virtue and wisdom which it shows in its own customary conduct. It cannot improve them except by improving itself; and the building up of the moral cosmos is a slow process. But that a community should spend its care upon bringing what is best within it to bear upon the opening powers of its children, even taking upon itself the responsibilities and privileges of parentage when the natural parent by his own vice and folly has abdicated them; that it should venture far more for the sake of the young, risking much in order to educate them into virtue, is the surest of all conditions of its welfare. Compared with this every other task that reformers and legislators can undertake sinks into insignificance: so rich is the innate inheritance of the child, and so dependent is his possession of it upon those into whose hands his life falls.

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II

THE CHILD AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

In one of the best known of Whitman's poems the writer has described the development of the universe in the mind of the child as the world of outward impressions stamped upon its developing consciousness, not only a store of memories, but the very form and structure which that consciousness should assume. As the "child went forth" from day to day, the wind and the sun, the procession of the cattle with their tinkling bells, the music and salt scents of the sea became, not only memories of the child, but "part of the child." So that when full consciousness has been attained a universe had been constructed in which henceforth that child will reside; in that mysterious inner world, apart and solitary, in which each one of us resides in our procession through time, and the pageant of passing things.

This is the real secret of the mystery of environment. The old conception of the eighteenth-century psychology, which regarded the mind as a piece of blank paper, upon which would be stamped the influence of surroundings, just as the printing press stamps varied pictures, some for honour, some for dishonour, has vanished before a larger revelation of the store of past inheritance and experience which each fragile child mind carries with it into the world. From the beginning it is scarred with ancestral sins or strengthened with the capital piled up by the effort of many generations. And although in the reaction from the extreme emphasis upon the inheritance of acquired characters, in which the thought of the nineteenth century swung as far wrong in one direction as that of the eighteenth century in another, many are inclined to doubt the whole philosophy built upon this conception, at least no one would venture to return to the theory of the *Tabula Rasa*. With the abandonment of that theory has gone the abandonment of the dreams based upon it. The child of the sweep might become kingly if reared in the palace; but no one imagines that by the sudden destruction of all the old, unquiet past, and the re-establishment in another year 1 of an age of gold, it would become possible to sweep away also all that past's inheritance in the children which were born of this time of innocence. It is as selecting and modifying impulses already implanted in some mysterious fashion in that developing child mind that the effect of environment is now seen mainly to operate. Environment has become "part of the child." Through the machine, as it were, formed by the influences of that environment, that child will henceforth interpret all future experience. In a rough, rather imperfect analogy, one may conceive of the child placing upon itself layers of outside protection built from the surrounding medium, just as the mollusc builds round itself coloured or grey shell out of the medium which is its home. But the analogy is, in fact, more profound. The child is not merely developing a shell intervening between itself and the world of reality outside; it is building from that world the actual fibre of its own being. When the process is complete no future impulse of sensation can rebuild or destroy this structure of the inner mind.

It is therefore of primary importance to understand the meaning of the environment which at the present is playing this persistent part of moulding and developing the mind of the new generation. It is the more important because in the main that environment has profoundly changed during half a century, and the change is still largely unrecognised by those who live to a large extent detached and independent from the populations which have passed from the one condition to the other. Educational systems, children's books, religious ideas, are still compiled in terms of the one rather than of the other. Perhaps the failure of so many of these—for failure is written large to-day over all their enterprise—is due to the fact that this change has been scarcely recognised. The change is as momentous in the intelligible language of children as a change of language itself in the life of an adult. For the most part we are talking to the children of the city as if in Hindoo or Arabic, instead of in the only tongue which they can understand.

The environment is the city; and the city is new in the history of the world, the creation of a single century. Men have, indeed, gathered together for centres of business or protection in all ages; and the centres have been dignified with the title of town or city. But these little collections of human habitations of the past, the mediæval town with its walls and churches, and swinging bells, or the later city of the England that slept through the eighteenth century, all unconscious of the change which was even then knocking at its doors, bear no sort of relationship to the city aggregation of to-day. Pepys visiting Bristol 200 years ago—Bristol then the second city of the kingdom—was astonished at the monstrous nature of its dimensions. There were even places, he records, where, standing in the centre, you could look all round and see nothing but houses. But this was entirely exceptional. For the most part the houses were embedded in gardens, nature everywhere creeping among the human habitations; and man walked uncertainly, still, on the whole, the occupant of a camp pitched for a time only in the midst of a natural world which would one day regain its supremacy and triumph over the ruins of his building. The old life was the life of the field. From that life has been built the literature of the past. Through that life all spiritual experience has become interpreted. The child reared under such condition may, indeed, have exhibited the stolidness which is often mistaken for stupidity, and the gravity, accepted as a lack of intelligence, which offers so glaring a contrast to-day between the child of the country and the child of the town. For two centuries, at least, that life had exhibited a steady decline in comfort, until, at the opening of the nineteenth century and for the next forty years, the English peasant appeared of all men the most miserable. But, all unconscious itself, that child was being daily moulded by the forces which had moulded the constitution of its ancestors. And when the time for definite, human teaching came, it was in the terms of the knowledge already thus obtained, through the medium of natural analogy, and linking on to the stored-up result of natural impression, that man conveyed his conceptions of ultimate things upon the mind of the generation which was to succeed him. I am not in the least maintaining that the comparison of the condition before and after the change evokes no other emotions but regret. Progress has brought many good things. In any case it is impossible to turn back and re-create a vanished past; nor is it helpful to rail against things that have been already accomplished. The old life, at least in the past two centuries, was incredibly hard, toilful, and degraded. The city has been the method of escape from intolerable conditions, and, to many, an enormous advance on any test of civilisation. But whether the city be better or worse, whether economic advance and material success are a compensation for the loss of the influence of natural things, at least (and this is the point) it is different. "They have fine clothes and houses";—so runs the challenge of the old peasants' revolt in a far-off England—"we have pain and labour; the rain and wind in the fields." That challenge rings down through all the centuries. But at worst the wind was that which blew where it listeth, independent of man's volition; and the rain made alike to fall upon the just and the unjust.

The child of the new city race is now developing under conditions in which man's volition is the only thing that counts, and forces independent of it, save the inertia of "dead" matter, are practically non-existent. That dead matter on the one hand, and man moulding it to his desires on the other, are the two permanent elements of its universe. It is a universe which no one has yet adequately interpreted, because literature and experience have been almost entirely limited to a class whose conditions are from the commencement entirely different.

A recently-published novel, of profound interest to the student of the times, *Slavery*, by Mr Bart Kennedy, is the first actual testimony with which I am familiar, by a child reared in the city abyss, of the developing life within the human consciousness as gradually it encounters the new environment which is moulding it to newer developments. There have been innumerable novels in which the writers descend into the depths from some different universe and show you the inhabitants, mournful or cheerful, with their quaint ways and manners of speech, and queer, distorted outlook and judgment of human affairs. The child of the slum or the tenement is the commonplace of pathos, especially in the Christmas story. It stands a pathetic figure shivering in the cold. It creeps through its unhappy home. It dies finally forgiving its enemies about Christmas time in extremity of pain. But in all these cases the author has never actually penetrated into the child mind.

He is looking *into* the abyss, not out from it. He has no conception of a life in which that which is central in his experience is on the horizon in the experience of another, and that on the circumference has become central; an experience in which the individual looks out from the mean street or block dwelling upon the universe and gradually constructs, with these as their essential ingredients, from the changing crowded street, the grey building, the little square, box-like tenement, which still bears, as a survival from some strange past time, the name of home, its scheme of an external world. Mr Kennedy, in chapters all too brief and from experience actually remembered, has taken his readers into the universe thus built up from the heart of the city. The great seas have dwindled into the canal in which the boys bathe. The world has passed from a world of colour into a world of grey. The little Catholic chapel in the heart of Manchester, which the child attended with his Irish mother, has provided the only outlet, with its lights and colour and strange, mystical appeals, from the set surroundings of material things. Beyond the city roofs is a glimpse of a changing sky, mysterious, irrational, which sends, now the fog, now the hot sunshine, and now the winter rain. The universe has become a place where man is and abides, capricious, irrational, with nothing about him secure and dependable and certain. The street cars, the crowded pavements, the aspect of the shops in the more brilliant thoroughfares, form a margin round the intimate experience of a consciousness built up from the narrow street of crowded tenements. When this child has already fashioned its universe from these elements, there comes to it the experience of a day in the country through a Sunday-school treat, and a new world is opened for a moment, of green and growing things. But the experience is fantastic, vanishing, not linked up to anything of the normal life of the day; and it passes again into the world of dreams. The human element has become all-powerful, the element which makes for restlessness; the nature element, which makes for quiet, has practically disappeared.

Here is the new environment, common to all and independent of the particular questions of poverty or of morality. To some it is the life of the slum, full of noise and discomfort; and all the earlier impression is of an irrational and loveless world. To others it is the life of the respectable street, carefully cleansed and orderly, the row of two-storied cottages built of grey brick, with the little area in front and the little yard behind, and each with its little kitchen and sleeping room and kindly family life. To others again it is a higher stage, with bow-windows and white curtains and a sacred parlour brightly ornamented, and at the back a tiny garden developing in mysterious fashion, at the right season, nasturtiums or sunflowers. But in all it is existence set in and developing to maturity in a labyrinth of human habitations. The child, like the astonished Pepys at Bristol, can everywhere look around him, and everywhere see nothing but houses. Nature has passed to the circumference of experience. The occasional excursion to a park, the occasional day's outing, makes no permanent impression when confronted with that solid, stored-up influence of the paved street and the crowded abode of men. The child, whether neglected or well cared for, developing in a queer, twilight world, where family existence is unknown, or, as in the majority, enthroned as the most important member of the little community, is growing to maturity under new conditions, in which the things that formerly encompassed him have disappeared and a new storm of sensation beats upon the mind as it awakens into conscious response to an external world.

The description may sound exaggerated by those who, on the one hand, would emphasise the survival of nature still left in the town, or, on the other, the facilities for means of escape so bountifully provided at the present. From my own experience certainly of the greatest and most advanced of these aggregations, I should be inclined to estimate as of little permanent influence either of these factors. The parks, sparsely scattered through the congested districts of London, have but little actual effect on the minds of the growing children not living in immediate contact with them. It is astonishing to find how little they are utilised as means of escape, even at the height of summer, from the paved, crowded street. A census taken at an elementary school some little distance from one of the parks, would prove, I think, astonishing to those who imagine these as the breathing places and playgrounds for any large number of the children in the neighbourhood. I have met numbers of children in Camberwell who have never seen the river Thames and never crossed any of the bridges. And to the average child any park of South London in the neighbourhood would be, for the most part, but visited in a rare excursion during a few hours of sunshine, and would be as little impressive upon the growing organism of the mind as any other chance visit to any other land of phantasy. And all the facilities of travel again in reality offer very little modification to the experience of the growing city race. An enormous proportion of the children in the elementary schools have never spent a night away from their homes. The day excursion, the Sunday-school treat, have become more and more specialised into a kind of experience in which a tiny portion of the town is for a moment conveyed into an ampler space with room for expansion and activity.

The trains pour their bands of excursionists down to recognised places of catering, in which a few thousand children, for a few hours in the day, enjoy an exhilarating time amid a wilderness of merry-go-rounds, cocoanut "shies," donkey races, and all the recognised apparatus of the bank holiday.

There are, of course, incursions of a longer period into this queer, outside universe, such as the fortnight in the country provided by philanthropic societies. Here is, indeed, an experience which can make ineffaceable impressions in the pliant material of the growing mind, and enable a world of quiet and large spaces and growing things to become "part of the child." But the experience at the best is only for the few, and even for these few (and I speak here with some experience), the impression is often more astonishing than lasting. The universe is not a universe where nature is, but one where man is not. The silence is more impressive than the appeal. The life is as isolated as a dream and never co-ordinated with the normal experience of the growing mind. On the return to the city that experience, as it were, pieces together again over the gap; and the impression of that queer, outside world of distant horizons and clean meadows and tranquillity is relegated into the memories of things faint and far away.

The first effect of this change, the most obvious but less profound, is the actual lack of stored-up concepts in the child mind to which can be linked the new impressions of the teacher. The word falls, as it were, dull and heavy and isolated, instead of awakening associations and memories which set it resounding through the chambers of the soul. It is of little use, for example, to exhort the child to consider the lilies of the field how they grow, if the only knowledge of such lilies is given by the dried-up specimen in the elementary school which has been laboriously catalogued as belonging to the Monocotyledonous Liliaceæ. Few people realise the importance which these processes of nature occupy in the early teaching of religion. The child's mind of necessity demands something concrete. Spiritual forces must be interpreted by the analogy of natural things. In consequence there is the whole apparatus of parable and illustration through which, for so many centuries, have been conveyed the interpretations of the laws of the spiritual universe. Let anyone take for himself a simple test. Let him go through a few chapters of the Bible, especially of the gospels, pen in hand, and carefully eliminate any text which demands for its clear understanding the recognition of some intelligible acquaintanceship with natural processes. He will be astonished at the immense rents and gaps in the recognised teaching, the mere fragments which remain. The sower sowing his seed, the seed which grows in secret, the ripening harvest, the sun setting red on the horizon, night on the mountain, the sea in storm—these are the visions and parables through which is built up the picture both of the first coming of the kingdom in a land of sunshine and flowers, and of the laws of that kingdom in all future time. It would be an extraordinarily interesting study, were it in the least degree possible, actually to examine in the mind of the city child, who has no other experience but that of the city, the meaning of such conceptions as these. Psychological analysis has shown that in nearly all normal children the process of thought acts immediately through visualisation. It is in pictorial concepts that the mind utilises the material which has been given from external impression. What kind of pictorial concept of the cornfield or the harvest, the world of growing things in fair weather or lowering skies, is provided as material for thought in impressions gathered exclusively in the city labyrinth? All unconsciously the teacher assumes in the child mind the same material and atmospheres which he himself possesses; and is inclined sometimes to wonder, sometimes to anger, at the lack of real response or interest in descriptions which mean much to the one and nothing to the other.

An illustration in a particular, special subject is provided by an examination of the hymns which, in the recollection of any grown-up person, were the hymns most popular in the days of his childhood. In my own case (and this is a personal testimony only), I was interested, in an attempt to analyse their charm, to find that in almost every example the particular verses contained some definite allusion to the external world of Nature. Immediately and quite unconsciously, perhaps, the words called up before the sensitive child mind some vision of stored-up memory; and in that call and response rested much of the attraction. "Lead, kindly light," is a hymn always popular with children, although the experience of the hymn itself is entirely beyond their range, and, indeed, their singing of it appears almost grotesque. "Edna Lyall" is at pains, in one of her books, to analyse this popularity, and is inclined to refer it to the fact of its simplicity in its pure, Saxon English. But much more than this I think the appeal strikes home in its flashing Nature visions of light and gloom, in which for a moment are illuminated moor and fen, crag and torrent. So, again, a hymn which naturally would make but little appeal to the child mind—

> When this passing world is done,
> When has sunk yon glaring sun,

was always welcome because always immediately flashing before the inward eye vision the memory of red sunsets upon wide horizons through which there came to be interpreted all the dreams of the fiery magnificence in the ending of a world. This concrete allusion, this tiny picture called up by association from the stored-up impressions of the past, is the secret of all these appeals: in one the "gathering waters," in another "fields beyond the swelling flood," in another, a "green hill far away," in another the gathering darkness and the stars appearing, and birds and beasts and flowers preparing for sleep. These and a hundred other examples demand the presence for the awakening emotion of a certain universe within the mind of the child. If that universe is to be, as now for so many, nothing but the straight street and the sky peeping over the roofs of innumerable houses, we shall be compelled to modify our children's hymnology, to write in that pictorial language and analogy which the child reared in such an atmosphere alone can comprehend.

I have no wish to over-emphasise this particular point, or to appear fanciful or sentimental in the treatment of nature and its exact relation to the religious consciousness. It is entirely true that for the many nature itself, as actually given in an external world through which God moves and operates, provides no real assistance to religious faith. The old primitive religion of the Vedas or the Norse mythology may weave out of natural forces and from close contact with them its visions of God's working and the presence of the Divine. Mankind again at the end of the long journey may perhaps find an ultimate consolation in life, either with Wordsworth in mystic contemplation of natural things—the discovery which cheered John Stuart Mill, as he thought of the weariness of the golden age to come—or with Maeterlinck in the cultivation of the garden of flowers. But for the many such an exultant pæan of triumph as the 104th Psalm has now but little meaning. And in any case the direct appeal to the evidence of God in nature is not an appeal to which children can respond. The detached contemplation of a world entirely outside the mind, the evidence of order or of beauty there displayed, only comes at the completion of a long course of education. The child has not yet learnt to contemplate anything but its own world itself, which is all its universe.

Nor would I over-emphasise the argument

stated finally in literature in the great ode upon "Intimations of Immortality in Childhood." The experience there given of a unity and exaltation in the earlier years in presence of natural things, the light that shines into the mind of the child from every meadow, grove, and stream, when

> The earth and every common sight
> To me did seem
> Apparelled in celestial light,

is not, it must be confessed with some sadness, an experience of any but the few. And to most of us, instead of the vision fading into the light of the common day, experience is such that every year creates a greater response to nature's beauty, a greater longing for all that is meant by the appeal of its yearly renewal. I have no doubt that even here the changed environment is creating changed conditions, that apart from any conscious material presentation, the child who has been brought up in the field will be different from the child who has been brought up in the city. But the particular point I am emphasising is a matter of pictorial language, of a language which, with each generation of city-bred people, is becoming more archaic and unintelligible as it summons them to contemplation of worlds beyond the horizon of the only world which they have ever known.

The second effect of this changed environment operates not through the absence of nature but the presence of man. For the first time in history the child is being reared in the perpetual contact of a crowd. Its playground is the crowded street: its home the crowded tenement: its school the gigantic human hive in which it is packed with 900 or 1600 creatures similar to itself. This is the human element making for unrest. Unrest, resulting in profound mental changes, is to prove the distinguishing mark of the new city race. The result, as all familiar with our town children know, is a forced and premature development. The child lives on the surface. It is immediately responsive to all advances. It makes friends in a moment. Shyness, stolidity, and reticence are unknown qualities, except when created by actual physical disease. The child lives in a coloured world of movement, of life continually changing, a kaleidoscope, a panorama of passing impressions. The price paid in this expenditure of a slender store of capital is undoubtedly a heavy one. The town child is far more attractive than the child of the country. In presence of the quick vivacity and ready affection of the one, the other appears heavy, dull, and indifferent. But that vivacity and quick response are the result of fires burning all too quickly, using up material that will be dearly required in the later years. For the moment it is prepared to do anything. Its nerves will carry it through the most hazardous enterprise. The little, fragile body has become an instrument pliant to the too-quickly developing will and emotion. But the result is seen and the price paid in later years, in the disquieting change which sweeps over the city-reared populations after the time of adolescence, and finally creates that "city race" which is so menacing a vision of the future. It is a race lacking in intellectual interest, demanding the cruder forms of excitement in betting or drink, or the more violent melodrama or newspaper mendacities; galvanised, only hardly, and for a moment, into interest in passing things; lacking just that stability and tenacity and capacity for "holding on" which was the old, national characteristic of the English race.

Whether the city population by itself, if surrounded with a ring fence, could survive for many generations, is still a debated point among social observers. There are those who challenge the production of a Cockney of three generations. Certainly the enormous influx of the country populations into the capital has at the present time concealed largely the actual result of the city environment acting on the pure city stock. But with each year this influence diminishes as the proportion of the city-bred rises and of country-bred falls.

Disquietude at the result of childhood reared in narrow streets and tiny crowded homes is becoming vocal in the agitation concerning alleged physical deterioration, and the public is exhorted—in advice not lacking in humour—to adopt systems of physical flexions or the marching and drill of military preparation, as a sufficient remedy for the cramping influences of the city environment. In the future more and more that city will find itself dependent upon itself: the father and mother reared within its labyrinth, uniting to raise a family under similar conditions, with the memories of any other kind of childhood becoming ever more faint and far away.

A third result of this environment is the disintegrating force which it is continually beating down upon the family life. The block dwelling and the tenement house have already advanced some way towards the abolition of the old, traditional home of the Englishman. More and more as one watches the play of these tremendous forces — the force of the crowd, the force of the aggregation of human lives, the force of everything making against security and privacy, and the staple growth of associations and memories linked to particular places—the more one becomes convinced of the inevitable moulding of human character into conformity with the only conditions by which those forces can attain equilibrium. Dr Reich, in his recently published *Imperialism*, has announced that the Imperialistic civilisation carried to its natural consummation, such as that now exhibited in America, demands the abolition of reticence and individual life, the common eating house, the common place of meeting, meals provided by companies and children educated by telephone, with the vanishing of the particular and local affections which make up the life of the family. It is not

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Imperialism but the city state, or rather perhaps it is the city state as an example of what this writer means by Imperialism, which is making for this change. This is something larger than the mere mournful commonplace of the vanishing of family life before the extremities of proverty or of crime. At the base of the city's activities, clinging like a fungus round its foundations, is that class in which family life has deliberately vanished, in which the child lives in the street, and meals are thrown to it, as it were, from an upper window, and the home has become a mere lair in which the creatures get themselves together for a few troubled hours of slumber. The existence of this class, and the methods of raising it to some more intelligible condition of being, form a special problem. But this class is not the staple material out of which the congested populations are composed. The ordinary life in one of such labour cities as those which surround the interior of London, still retains the decencies of family existence, with a loyalty to the clan, strong affections between parent and child, a resolve together to fight the battle of existence against a world outside which is hostile or indifferent. But it is upon this staple material of which the race is woven that the forces of disintegration are ceaselessly beating. Interest becomes more and more transferred to the land that lies outside the front door. Movement continually is awakened by that kind of vague restlessness with which the life of the crowd appears to infect the individuals. A family group may keep in a certain neighbourhood for reasons of work or interest, but within that neighbourhood they will be continually moving from tenement to tenement or cottage to cottage. The seeds of local affection are pulled up before they have had time to take root. The particular children's interests — tame animals, growing plants and flowers, the natural litter and disorder which is the creation and delight of the child mind—of necessity become nuisances where man is so closely packed with man. The "kindred points of heaven and home" are vanishing from an environment in which heaven is but the glimpse of bright or clouded sky between the roofs of high dwellings, and home a cubicle box planed to its simplest possibilities, and embedded in a huge cliff of similar desirable mansions.

How far the development of this environment will persist in its present courses is an uncertain factor. That it should persist in its present condition is inconceivable. The thing is moving as we gaze; and the present reveals a state of change whose ultimate result no man can foresee. There are some who accept what I suppose would be regarded as the kindlier view, such as Mr H. G. Wells in his later prophecies of the future. These see mechanical advance destroying what mechanical advance has created. Immense improvement in locomotion and in the transmission of power will redistribute the population over the surrounding countryside. And the ancient sanities, quiet, the sun and the rain, "Night with her train of stars and her great gift of sleep," will return again to become "part of the child." If this be true, a period of perhaps less than a century will be marked by the historian of the future as a passing phase in which the populations silently heaped themselves together into menacing aggregations, and as silently again fell apart. And the problem of the environment of the city child will appear but as the problem of a passing condition of restlessness and fever, leaving its impression, indeed, upon all the race which has passed through this particular condition, but remaining, on the whole, little but a disquieting memory. The life in the choked streets of the city will be remembered, a challenge and warning, just as the period when Israel became the slaves of Egypt before the time of the deliverance became, in the national history, a perpetual subject of future menace and rejoicing.

There are others, however, who adopt a different forecast of the future. They see man passing definitely into the city state. More and more he will find the life of nature impossible. The country with its silence and appeals will only terrify him. If he escape for a moment from the presence of man it will only be to a Margate or a Hampstead Heath in the daytime, from which he will very rapidly return into the well-known, lighted streets when darkness falls. The process of his evolution commenced with Nature insistent and triumphant, as he crept fearfully through the forests or over the great plains, embedded, as it were, in natural things, brother to the fire and the other brute creations from which his own life sprang. It will be completed with Nature altogether divorced from him in that kind of city of which a foretaste is arising even now on the other side of the Atlantic, where whole populations are contained within gigantic buildings, human hives in which they can be born and marry and die without ever having seen the world outside. If this be the development, then the changes here indicated in the necessities of education will be carried to their logical limits. The language not only of the printed book, but of the ideas which that printed book endeavours to convey, will be reinterpreted into the experience of a new universe. We shall conceive of a race living evermore on the surface, quick, sensitive, responsive, with a human interest taking the place of the nature element. New parables, new fairy tales, new methods of interpreting the meaning of unseen and spiritual forces, will be created by a race to whom in time the literature of the present, which has survived from the past, would be as unintelligible as the Sanscrit Scriptures, as meaningless as the Celtic imagery to the present inhabitant of Pentonville or Brixton.

In either of these developments there would be a certain security. The difficulty of the present is the uncertainty. We are half in the one universe, half in the other; wandering, as the poet of this later dawn announced, between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born. And the enormous obstacles facing all elementary education among those classes particularly affected by the change, and the failure of religion in any way adequately to influence the springs of action in the wilderness of the modern city, is undoubtedly very largely due to the condition of man, who all unconsciously has passed from one condition of being and yet not recognised the laws and limitations of his new life.

My function in this essay is only to emphasise the actual conditions of the environment of the child and the changes this environment is creating in the organisation of that child's mind. I am asked neither to approve nor to condemn. It would be foolish in a work dealing specifically with education and the children, to attempt to outline either mitigations of the more harassing difficulties of a great social change, or any large suggestions for complete transformation of the present operating forces. That environment, however, has factors which in the future must be considered by those who would organise future teaching, moral and spiritual, as much as physical and intellectual. These factors must be frankly faced. There is just the vanishing of the nature element, the loss of that accumulation of presentation material to which the descriptions of biblical scenes and the analogy of spiritual forces must always make in the mind of the child a primary appeal. There is the danger, therefore, lest religious teaching should of necessity become mere hard, dogmatic outline committed to memory, neither stimulating in its direct meaning nor actually incorporated into the constitution of the mind of the growing child. There is the danger also lest a mind growing up, as Burne-Jones described his childhood in the grey streets of Birmingham, "starved of beauty," should find itself in later years deprived of the capacity to respond to one of the greatest of all appeals, of the triumphant working in this world of the energies of God. Second, as I have said, there is the human element making for restlessness, creating a premature development, an excitability for which the price must afterwards be paid. And here also religious education must accept this as a present fact and must endeavour to exercise influences towards tranquillity and quietness. The city race will prove, on the one hand, more and more susceptible to the emotional influence of a "revival"; but, on the other, I am afraid, more and more manifesting the speedy evanescence of that influence when the actual machinery of its stimulus is withdrawn. And, third, the environment is making for the abolition of family life. Undoubtedly here are large possibilities of an appeal to a communal sense of fellowship and the incorporation of the individual into membership of a larger association. On the other hand, we cannot but remember that of all the methods of translation of spiritual realities into terms of human interpretation, those most sure and insistent were those accepted from the mystical bonds of family union. "When ye pray say 'Our Father.'" That is the bedrock conception of the Christian view of the overlordship of the universe. It is for religious education to insist upon the sacred and unchangeable nature of this reality of the everlasting obligations incurred in the relationship of husband and wife, father and son, brother and sister; to demand that in no future development of city or Imperial civilisation this obligation shall be neglected or destroyed.

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III

THE CHILD'S CAPACITY FOR RELIGION

In a broad way it may be said that the child's capacity for religion is no less than the sum-total of all its capacities of thinking, feeling, and willing as a human being. The psychological study of the religious consciousness is fast making it clear that religion is no abnormal product, much less a disease, of man's mind. On the contrary, it is the outcome of the natural and normal activities of human nature,—as truly and almost as certainly as to evolve language, to constitute society, or to have and to exercise moral sentiments and judgments on matters of right and wrong conduct. Again, the researches of comparative religion have made it clear that "the history of religions is the history of religious man." It is man as a religious animal who makes religions, as truly as it is man as a speaking animal who makes languages; or man as a social animal who makes society and the different forms of social organisation.

If by "primitive man" we do not mean some wholly hypothetical being that is not as yet quite human, but do mean man in the lowest condition of race-culture in which we actually find him; and if we give a sufficiently liberal interpretation to the term "religious"; then we seem to be warranted in affirming that all men, including the most nearly primitive, are naturally religious. The assumption that every normally constituted offspring of the human species has a capacity for religion is, therefore, warranted by the study of man as a religious being, as well as of religion in its historical development. It is human to be religious. It is something less than human, or more than human, or somehow *extra-*

human, not to be religious. This conviction may be confidently asserted in the name of modern psychological and historical science.

The same studies are slowly but firmly establishing another allied conviction. The roots of religion in human nature and in human history are manifold and widely ramifying. This statement is proved true, whether we have regard chiefly to the individual or chiefly to the race. We cannot, indeed, identify the so-called religious nature of man with either the moral or social or the intellectual and rational nature. Neither can we resolve the religious experience wholly into a matter of instinct, or of impulse, or of the so-called "subconscious" or "subliminal." Its phenomena are neither exclusively those of feeling, or of thinking, or of willing. It is a complex, involving all these and, perhaps, even other elements. As being just that complex which it naturally is, it admits of an almost indefinite variability; while at the same time maintaining a marvellous continuity and even spiritual unity. Just as the languages and ethical sentiments and practices of man vary almost indefinitely, so do the capacities and experiences of the life of religion. As yet religion, quite as much as language or morals, expresses and effectuates the spiritual unity of the race. At the risk of being misunderstood I will venture to affirm: Every individual man, who is normal, has his own peculiar form of religious experience; and yet by this experience he is bound into a certain oneness of the Spirit belonging to all mankind. Such is the infinite variety in unity of the religious consciousness of man.

And what is writ small in each man's soul is writ large in the history of the race. There is no form or branch of man's racial development which has gone on, or which can go on, in a complete separateness from the development of religion. Between religion and every form of race-culture—industry, commerce, politics, education, science, philosophy, morals, and art—there is always an interchange of influences.

The history of man's racial experience in the past confirms the conclusions derived from a study of the relations existing between the different forms and phases of his complex nature.

These conclusions, which are established by the psychological and historical study of religion, form fitting assumptions with which to approach the theme of this chapter. In a word, the child's capacity for religion is one important and complex phase of its being human; as a "child of man" it is naturally and normally, in manifold and subtle ways, not only capable of being religious, but bound to be religious. Its destiny is then one of more or less, of good or bad, of symmetry or distortion; it is not one that admits of a cultivated power to transcend the limits of its species, whether by rising to superhuman heights or by sinking to bestial depths. To anticipate a practical suggestion: the would-be religious teacher or helper, whether it be of the human child or of the human adult, should always rest in the confidence that he is dealing with this latent, if not as yet developed, capacity.

In our analysis of the complex capacity of the child for the experiences of religion, if we begin where the elements are most evasive and obscure but are lowest in the intellectual scale, we may speak of the impulsive and emotional sources of religion. These are relatively significant and powerful in the life of the child, as they are in the childhood of the race. But they continue to exist and to exert no small influence even over the conscious religious life of the most cultured adult. In religion, as in all forms of his experience, man believes but knows not why he believes. He feels, but often he is almost powerless to tell whether his feeling is rational or is, in its direction, true to a desirable end. He is obliged to act, where the justification in reason, and the significance and larger final purpose of his action, are almost or quite completely hidden from his view. And if this is true of the cultured adult, and of the adult man in the childhood of the race, it is *a fortiori* true of the child in all conditions and stages of race-culture.

It is now quite generally recognised that the instinct or impulse to "self-preservation" contributes an important influence in the excitement of the religious consciousness. The term itself expresses a group of subtle and forceful psychical reactions which impel the soul toward the belief and practice of religion. Even with the most meagre and childish conception of the interest which it is desirable to conserve, the human being soon discovers that much of good and evil is most mysterious in its source and quite beyond his own either direct or indirect control. Hence arises the desire to "square himself" (a phrase I borrow from Professor Hopkins) with those invisible powers on whose action his weal or woe seems to depend. And as the conception of the interests to be conserved enlarges, and the "Self" to be defended against evil and to be made secure of the good becomes more comprehensive, the desire to be enlightened, purified, and saved from moral evil, grows to be a powerful and rational excitement to the religious life.

Closely connected with its impulses to self-preservation are the restlessness and dissatisfaction of the human child with all present conditions of being. The "hunger" which gives impulse to economic and artistic betterment has its counterpart in the religious life. As von Humboldt well said: "All religion rests on a need of the soul; we hope, we dread, because we wish." The ceaseless craving for satisfaction is an important part of the human being's capacity for religion. To try to satisfy fully this craving, without resort to the sentiments and ideas of religion, is a vain and injurious procedure. In its highest form it becomes the longing for purity and peace. It is to this that Jesus and Buddha both made such powerful appeals. And it is the attempt of the present age to *satisfy* the deepest needs of human nature by a more abundant supply of physical comforts and of sensuous pleasures, which constitutes and validates some of the most effective influences for thwarting the chief benefits of the religious life.

"The heart," said Novalis, "is the organ of
religion." And without doubt it is in forms
IV. of feeling that many of the more primitive and
effective capacities of the child for religion
consist. Among these forms it has for a long
time been customary to speak of fear as the
chief, or the only source, of primitive religious
consciousness. "Fear first made the gods,"
said Petronius,—thus uttering a statement
which is, for savage or primitive men, largely
but by no means wholly true.

There can be no doubt that the older forms of orthodox religion, and of the accompanying ecclesiastical training, overwrought upon this capacity of the child, to the marring and degrading of its religious experience.

V A more sympathetic study of comparative religion shows that, even in the lowest forms, a sort of social feeling which is a mixture of drawings of affection and desire for good-fellowship mingles with fear or veneration in the worship of the gods. Not to recognise the more than merely animal capacity of the child for fear would be to neglect to use one of the most natural and proper avenues to the soul. But not to accompany the appeal to this capacity with the appeals to the affectional and friendly impulses, and thus to moderate it and make it more rational, is, perhaps, the most dangerous of all mistakes in dealing with the religious nature of the child.

VI It was a wise saying of Spinoza: "There is no hope without fear, and no fear without hope." The Invisible Power with which the imagination of man environs him may be conceived of as kindly and good; and, by rising to the sublimest heights of religious faith, it may be known in experience as Redeeming Love. The capacity for hope, which is almost deathless in the human soul, —for he who has lost all and every manner of hope is indeed already a lost man,—is accordingly to be reckoned with as a part of the child's capacity for religion.

VII

As the imagination is led on to construct the conception of a superhuman majesty and power and goodness in the gods, or in the Alone God, the emotional characteristics of religious experience take their colouring from the more distinctively ethical feelings of admiration, dependence, humility, and resignation. Of these four the former two may be appealed to relatively early in the development of the child's mental life. But genuine humility and unfeigned resignation are the accomplishments of the most cultured adult religious manhood.

III

When the "will-to-live" of the individual man, which expresses itself in all these more self-assertive forms of emotion and impulse, becomes chastened by meeting in collision with other wills, and when the mind becomes conscious of that one supreme and all-powerful Will which no finite powers can overrule or successfully resist, the altruistic feelings of a social kind and the more egoistic feelings of fear, hope, and self-preservation, combine to form bonds of attachment between the human being and God. In the childhood of the race these feelings are called forth in a special way by ancestor-worship and by the worship of domestic and tribal gods. They express themselves in such institutions as the communal feast, and the sacrifice which has the meaning of a friendly gift. But ethical love as a source of religion is a rare merit, and belongs almost exclusively to Judaism and to Christianity. Nor does the history of man's religious development show, as some have claimed, that such love arises out of the sexual emotions. On the contrary, the ethical love of God is a development of those domestic and tribal affections which are more remote from the suspicion of taint from sexual feeling. It was the *fatherly* pity and tenderness of the majestic and holy Jehovah which begat the answering love of Divine Being in the breast of the pious Jew. We love Him because He first loved us, with the love which shows its supreme manifestation in Redemption,—it is thus that the capacity for ethical affection toward God is opened up by Christianity. Now all this is favourable, in the family circle, and under the symbol and relations of the life of the family, to the cultivation of the child's natural capacity for this species of the Divine love. The child is a social being; and through the love of the father and mother whom it has seen, the capacity may be developed for the love of the Father whom it has not seen.

All these, and all other merely impulsive and emotional capacities on the part of the child would not, however, furnish an *object* of religious faith or knowledge. At most they could only result in vague, impotent longings for some unknown end. It is, therefore, because the child is capable of developing a certain rationality of nature that we can speak of its capacity for religion in the fullest meaning of the word. I am using the term "rationality" with a very vague and general significance. But since the essence of religion includes the belief in superhuman, invisible power, working after the analogy—at least to some extent—of the human spirit, we may fitly claim that the imagination and intellect must have the capacity of framing the conception of such a power; otherwise there can be no real development of the life of religion.

The active, planful imagination which develops so early in the child is an important factor in its capacity for religion. Indeed, unless the image-making faculty in man could quite outstrip its analogous activities in the consciousness of the lowest animals, religion, so far as the construction of its object is concerned, would be quite impossible. With the savage or primitive man, as with the child, every vivid and persistent experience, especially if it becomes somewhat intimately connected with the emotions and practical interests, is *prima facie* taken as representing some real being or actual event. It is further experience, and the development of that kind of knowledge which we call science, that forces the distinction between what is *merely* imaginative and what is imaged upon a sound basis of *real* beings and *actual* events. All the effort of the intellect in the framing of the conceptions of religious experience is directed toward making them ideally worthy and at the same time defensible as rational and true. And by *true* in this connection we mean, having some correlate in reality. The process of purifying and rectifying the earlier products of imagination and thought is as necessary to the life and development of religion as it is to any other of the more serious and profound aspects of man's complex experience. In the childhood of the race the Divine Spirit quickens and stirs up the latent capacities of imagination and intellect to construct, in childish fashion, the conception of the Object of religious faith and worship. In the same way the skilful teacher of the child avails himself of its natural capacities of imagination and intellect in the field of religion. To attempt to order out or to suppress imagination would be as vain as it would be foolish. To purify and rectify its products, and to train it progressively towards the capacity for raising the conceptions and faiths of religion toward higher and truer ideals, is the natural and fortunate way of availing one's self of its helpful activity.

In this connection we may fitly remind ourselves that the necessity for cultivating imagination is as essential and as great in the development of science or art as it is in the development of religion. Without the creative imagination, operating in a planful way, there would be neither science, nor art, nor religion. And in religion as in art or science, the test which determines whether the imagination rings true to the tone struck out of it by the unseen hand of Reality, whether the imagining is vain and misleading, or rational and helpful, is the growing experience of the race. This growth is, for the individual as well as for the race, for the child as well as the adult, the work of the Divine Spirit shaping in the soul of man the Idea of its own Real Self. In religious terms, it is God revealing Himself as God, according to the God-given capacity of man to receive the revelation.

In religion as in all other forms of man's complex development, thinking does not take the initiative. Yet intellectual curiosity is natural to man and works in the spirit of the child as well as of the savage or uncultured adult. The Whence and Why, and What-for of things, man desires to know—especially, but not solely, when these things are intimately related to his own experiences of pleasure and pain. Therefore, the religious view has always figured prominently as an explanation of the origin, the course, and the destiny of that complex of things and souls which makes the World.

It is, of course, impossible to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of the child, or to afford a permanent support to the growth of its religious experience, by referring to the Divine Being, in the gross as it were, as the maker of things and the giver of the human soul. But it is equally impossible to satisfy its religious nature, or to develop symmetrically its capacity for religion on the intellectual side, while leaving God entirely out of that account which modern science offers of the constitution and development of "Nature" so-called. Nothing is more foreboding for both science and religion than the current attempt to ascribe to the two forms of thinking and knowing quite definitely limited and mutually exclusive spheres. While faith and feeling, and the influence of human ideals, cannot be ruled out of the scientific explanation of the whole realm of experience, the conception of order, law, causation, and the other satisfactions of man's scientific nature, are integral and indestructible parts of his capacity for religion. So that even if the old-fashioned conception of nature and the supernatural, as holding for exclusive spheres of phenomena, were definitively disproved, and the former claims for the miraculous were forever abandoned, religion could never be wholly resolved into vague feeling or irrational faith. Religion always has been, and it is essentially, a *theory of reality.*

This capacity of the child for understanding the causes and orderly connections and final purposes of the phenomena should be trusted and cultivated in the interests of religious development. To teach him that what science properly refers to as natural forces and laws are also quite as properly looked upon as expressions of the will and wisdom and love of the Infinite God is to appeal, in a way to afford the prospect of the most lasting satisfactions, to his intellectual capacity for taking the religious point of view. And if this appeal is made with the use of that symbolism and illustration which adapt it to the childish stage of intellect, it favours a return on the part of the individual of to-day to the sublime truth, so largely latent and perverted indeed, which was of old revealed to the reflection of the race. In every event of the child's life, in every pulsation of its body, and every stirring of its mind, the immanent presence of the Omnipresent One may come to be recognised. And when this presence is not only felt and recognised, but is also persuasive and potent for the purifying and uplifting of the child's conduct and entire spiritual being, religion is accomplishing its peculiar and most profitable work. This work is the production of that attitude toward God which is the spirit of filial piety, and which is called "faith"; and the perfection of which is the redemption of human souls, and of society, as a community of sons of God.

It is, however, the capacity of the child for ethical and æsthetical sentiments and ideals, to which the higher forms of religion chiefly appeal. In the lower and more primitive forms of religion the feelings of obligation toward the gods take the negative form of *tabu*. Certain things are forbidden under commands that do not seem to have a human origin, and that are enforced by penalties which emanate from a mysterious and invisible source. On the more positive side, religion expresses this feeling in the form of gifts, prayers, sacraments, and rites. When, then, the child is made to believe that God not only regards its behaviour from the point of view of its moral value, but searches its heart with an inescapable wisdom as to its motives, purposes, and most hidden thoughts, its capacity for religion is appealed to in a most forceful and important way.

In my judgment, this appeal cannot be made with the utmost possible effectiveness, so long as pleasure or happiness is made the measure of the perfection and the desirableness of the moral Ideal. The present age is sadly in need of some more lofty and stimulating conception of the inherent nature and obligations of a life of righteousness and holiness than any which the current hedonistic ethics can possibly afford. Instead of the capacity for happiness, whether in the individual or in the multitude, being the measure of the obligation to develop the capacity for righteousness and holiness, the former seems at the present time largely to have submerged, if not to have injured or destroyed the other. But I have confidence enough in the permanency and power of man's longing for spiritual purity and for the peace of reconcilement with God and of resignation to His Will, to believe that a more vigorous and successful life of devotion to moral ideals, at whatever cost of suffering, is well within the limits of human nature when touched and inspired by that Spirit which we, alas! so thoughtlessly call Holy. Every normal human child responds to the appeal to strive after some preferred form of conduct. In general, at least, a part of the child's capacity for religion is its power to look into the invisible and unknown for a law and an ideal, that is higher and better than anything which it finds in its environment of fact.

XII

Von Hartmann agrees with Kant, as indeed all careful psychological analysis must, in holding that "the feeling of the sublime," which is the most important among the æsthetical sentiments, is a source and explanation of religious experience. The capacity for appreciating the sublime, the admirable, the unspeakably majestic, is one of the most potent factors in the child's capacity for religion. "I call that sublime," says Kant, "which is absolutely great." "The sublime is that, the mere ability to think which shows a faculty of mind surpassing every standard of sense." Yet this faculty is human; and it lies latent in the soul of every normal human child.

The mystery and awfulness which shroud all our human conceptions of God, when softened and sweetened with confidence in His redeeming love, are wonderfully attractive to the mind of man. It is chiefly this aspect of religion to which religious Mysticism makes its appeal: and any form of religious doctrine or life which entirely eliminates the mystical, fails of fully satisfying the religious capacity of man. How fond the multitude is of displaying an excessive, an almost unlimited admiration for its hero, for the time being! Yet how absolutely unworthy of any such sentiment that hero really is! But this very foolish excess shows the marvellous capacity for adoring the really admirable which the human soul possesses. It is the Object of religious faith which is alone worthy of such sentiments.

All those so-called "capacities" of the
child for religion are in a way subsidiary to XIII
its capacity of choosing God as the Ruler and Redeemer of the spiritual life. If the child could only feel and think about God, if its mental exercises ended in the formation of a more or less satisfying Ideal, its religious condition would be sad indeed. To crave that which we can in no measure, and at no

time, obtain and to long for that upon which the will is powerless to fix itself, and by which it can in no respect fashion conduct, is to prepare one's self for melancholy and a melancholic failure, and for the doom of final despair. But the human being, although in a limited and imperfect way, has the capacity of choosing God. It is in the exercise of this capacity that the life of religion culminates. Primarily considered, it is the voluntary taking of that filial attitude toward the Divine Will which is the essence of piety and the beginning of the life of the child of God. It is also, considered as a development, the progressive following of the path of life, conceived of as marked out for the individual by the same Will of God.

It is at this point especially that the capacity of the child comes into its closest and most effective relation with the work of Jesus, the Christ. In the religious, as in all other forms of the practical life of the child, the influence of example is most potent, is ever apt to be supreme. The child is not, indeed, capable of comprehending the mystical relations in which the dogmas of Christianity teach that Jesus stands to God; neither can he entertain the conceptions in debate between those who hold to the double, and those who affirm the single nature of the "Son of Man." But the child is capable of appreciating, in a childlike but in a substantially true and exceedingly effective way, the beauty and the moral value of the kind of life which Jesus led. By an act of will, it is capable of choosing to follow Jesus, and to be a son of God after the pattern of him who is, in a special and unique way, God's Son. To express this capacity in terms that have their origin in the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles, the child is capable of conversion, resignation, and edification in the religious life, after the rule, and in the spirit, of Christ.

Two or three observations may fitly bring to an end this very imperfect survey of the child's capacity for religion. Briefly described, its capacity is that of forming an image of the Divine Being, and of taking toward this image, regarded as representative of Reality, a fitting attitude of intellect, feeling, and will. Undoubtedly it is true that the human child makes God in its own image. Agnosticism and unbelief have always brought against this procedure, whether in the case of the individual child or of the adult, of the childhood or of the relative maturity of the race, the charge of being invalid and even deceptive. But the religious tenet reverses the statement which we have made from the psychological point of view, and affirms that God makes the human child or adult in His own—*i.e.* in God's image. Thus the writer of Genesis i. 26 f. represents Elohim as saying: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" and then asserts: "So Elohim created man in his own image, in the image of Elohim created he him."

The teacher of religion, and especially the believer in the central tenets of Christianity, can never for a moment admit that the contention of Agnosticism, true as many of its alleged facts undoubtedly are, is justifiable either as pure theory or as controlling practice. Certainly the capacity of the child for religion is limited by its own nature; and the God in whom it believes and whom it worships and obeys, must ever be imaged and known in terms of its own faculties. But this making of the image of God by the child after the pattern of its own image is considered from the other point of view, God's making, by a course of progressive evolution, of the child into the Divine image. And the denial of the possibility of this, and of the obtaining of a true knowledge of God in this way, when carried out to its logical result, issues in the denial of the possibility for man of any species of truth, such as will seem to put science or society upon assured foundations of knowledge.

It follows, then, that to leave wholly untouched or relatively undeveloped any one

side or aspect of this manifold capacity for
1. religion on the part of the child is to limit
or disturb the balance of its religious development.
But, on the other hand, the natural
development of the child's mind follows a
certain psychological order. The impulsive
and instinctive sources of religious experience
are earliest in their effective operation, and are
most influential in the first stage of religious
2. development. Fear, hope, the instinct of self-
preservation, the restlessness of a vague
intellectual curiosity, and the feeling of
dependence, constitute the more primary
factors in the child-life to which religious
instruction may address itself. But as the
3. period of more rapidly advancing maturity
approaches, the more definitely intelligent
activities, and the power of generalisation and
of the constitution of ethical and æsthetical
ideals, come more prominently into play.
For that complex of aptitudes and activities
which we denominate the "capacity for
religion" stands as much in need of *symmetrical*

development as does the political, or the social, or the scientific, capacity of man.

4. The child's capacity for religion, on the other hand, is an exceedingly variable affair, with many degrees of quantity; and with an indefinite manifoldness of exercise and of development. Every child is potentially religious, but every child is sure to be a religious development of a species somewhat peculiarly its own. There are born realists, idealists, and mystics, in religion as in philosophy. There are children in whom feeling naturally predominates over thought and the practical life; there are others who run a career more governed by calculation or by the tests of scientific knowledge; and there are those in whom the interests of a most practical character seem to leave little room for the sentiment or constructive thinking which are required by the ideals of either morality, art, or religion. There is also a
5. somewhat fundamental and irremovable difference between the religious capacities and

experiences of the two sexes; and among the various ages and stages of human development. Tribal and racial differences appear, although in a somewhat vague and baffling way, as we study the subject from the points of view of ethnology and comparative psychology. Indeed, the capacity for religion is a function of race-culture; and race-culture is itself profoundly modified by the degree and kind of religious development which, at any particular time, enter into it. What is true of mankind in general is true of every individual child.

The recent psychological investigations of religious experience have made much of the "subliminal," on the one hand, and on the other hand of the vague but potent stirrings of a sexual sort, as they become influential in the conscious life at the period of adolescence. In my judgment both these considerations, important as they are, have been relatively overworked. Undoubtedly, in religion, as in every other form of human life and human development, the factors of influence which enter somewhat definitely into the field of consciousness constitute only a part of those which are most forceful and determining. But after all, religion is always and essentially a personal matter; and it can reach the fulness of its mission, and express its total nature, only when it exists as an attitude, adopted with a feeling of conviction, on the part of a finite Self toward that other and all-comprehending Self. The religious education of the child can, then, no more be satisfied without raising the appropriate ideals above the threshold of consciousness, and making them definite objects of appreciation and of the practical grasp of will, than can any other form of education. To educate is to direct the conscious activities of reflection and choice upon what would otherwise remain in the vagueness and mist of the "subliminal." God is doubtless there—behind the veil; yes, in the veil. But the appeal to the religious capacity is designed to help the mind to see through the veil, if not wholly to put it aside.

7 As to the various exaggerations of the influence of the child's sexual nature and sexual development upon its capacity for religion, I can scarcely bring myself to speak in so moderate terms. That the worship of the divine power of life, and of its symbols and operations, sexual and otherwise, has played a great part in the religious development of mankind, there can be no doubt. But, as I have already said, it is the other social feelings and social relations out of which the ethical love and pure service of God have come in the past, and must always come in the future. It is to the child's capacity for these that religious education makes its most confident appeal.

5 And, finally, the child's capacity for religion is, in general, very largely a social matter. It is as members of the human race and not as solitary reflecting minds that men are religious. It is as a members of a social

community which has a religious, as well as a purely commercial or political significance, that the child receives and develops its capacity for religion. And here is where the Church or social religious organisation has its mission to make a wise and confident appeal to this capacity. The final realisation of the development which the capacity implies is the perfected Kingdom of God.

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IV

THE CHILD AND SIN

The child furnishes the only actual type of innocence. With its personality incompletely formed, its experience narrowly circumscribed, and its intellect undeveloped, it is necessarily prevented from temptation to many of the forms of wrong-doing or wrong-thinking which so easily beset maturer age. The relative ignorance of evil, the consequent trustfulness and absence of suspicion, the receptiveness and docility, the simplicity and sincerity which belong to childhood in an especial degree, enable us to refer to the child as in some particulars the standard of perfection to which manhood must strive to attain. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven"; "Unless ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Of course, these words of Jesus Christ cannot be so interpreted as to imply that childhood is morally perfect, in any sense of the word "perfect." Some men, however, have been led to attribute to the child, or rather to the infant, a unique moral excellence. Rousseau, for example, regarded children as coming perfect from their Creator's hand. And we are familiar with Wordsworth's lines:

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar.
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory, do we come
> From God, who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

On the other hand, the child nature is always characterised by what, in older persons, would be described as faults and vices. Young children are invariably very impatient of godly restraint and discipline; they exhibit a passionateness of temper, a wilfulness, a greed, an unconscious cruelty, and a capacity for unrestrained self-pleasing, which serve to convince the majority of minds that there is indeed much of the old Adam in human nature from the first. "Can you possibly doubt the doctrine of original sin," the present writer was once asked by a mother, and again by a theologian with experience of Sunday Schools, "if you have ever had anything to do with children?"

That every infant inherits a vitiated or corrupted nature, which is the source of all its actual sin, has in fact hitherto been the received explanation of the waywardness of childhood and also of the universal depravity of mankind. And from loyalty to this doctrine many who have been remarkable for their love for children have been led to depict their nature in the darkest colours.

The doctrine of original sin refers the universal prevalence of moral imperfection throughout the race to a fall from an original state of innocence or integrity at the beginning of human history. That catastrophe is held to have corrupted human nature so that every human being finds himself, from the moment of his birth, in a state of moral derangement, and inclined, by an ingrained bias, to evil rather than to good. Thus every child is credited by the theologian with an "ineradicable taint of sin," derived from his first parent and received through hereditary transmission. Our whole nature was thereby rendered "shattered and unsound," the balance of flesh and spirit disturbed, the normal and free action of the will hindered. Such inherited taint or bias, "original sin," as it is termed, is indeed distinguished from actual or voluntary sin, of which it is said to be the source, and is by many Christians regarded as something which rather appeals to the compassion of God than merits His anger. Yet original sin has generally been held, within the Christian Church, to involve guilt.

The following citations from the formularies of various branches of the Church will serve to illustrate Christian teaching on this subject.

The ninth Anglican Article declares that original sin "is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit, and therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

The Westminster Confession speaks still more strongly: "By this sin they [Adam and Eve] fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions."

The Roman Catholic doctrine of original sin differs from that of the Protestant branches of the Church chiefly in regarding the effect of the Fall as a loss of a supernatural addition to unfallen man's nature rather than as a corruption of that nature itself. Our nature was affected but indirectly, and was weakened rather than wholly depraved. The Roman Church also denies that concupiscence, which it takes to be a result of the Fall, is of the nature of sin.

So long as the idea that man was originally created at once a moral and an innocent being, positively good and free from evil, dominated Christian thought, it was natural to regard the universality of sin as only explicable in terms of heredity, and to refer the general depravity of the race to the "wreck and ruin of a once fair and perfect harmony." Since, however, the doctrine of the special creation of man has been abandoned in the light of modern scientific knowledge, and his gradual emergence from a brute condition has become a received belief, the doctrine of a catastrophic moral fall of the whole race in its head has been correspondingly discredited. Increased knowledge as to the nature of the narratives contained in the early chapters of Genesis has also contributed to this change of view. Further, the critical examination both of the concepts and of the processes involved in the derangement of human nature by a moral lapse on the part of the first parents of the race, and in the transmission by natural heredity of the consequences believed to be derived from that event, has brought to light many difficulties which render the doctrine of a Fall and of Original Sin, in the judgment of many, untenable.[1] And so, although these doctrines have until lately commanded the assent not only of theologians, but also of poets and philosophers, there are many to-day who feel compelled to seek in another direction for an explanation of the universality of human sinfulness, and therefore also for the key to the interpretation of the nature of the child.

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[1] An examination of the doctrine of original sin from the points of view of natural science and philosophy will

A scientific account of the moral condition of infancy and childhood can be the outcome only of observation, experiment, and induction. And of late years much work has been done, and much literature has been written, in connection with the psychology of early age; consequently some light has been thrown on the genesis and growth of sin in the individual human being.

Let us then proceed, in the light of such knowledge, to examine first of all the child's

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be found in the present writer's Hulsean Lectures on *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, Pitt Press, 1902; and a full investigation of the Fall story, its sources and nature, and of the Jewish and Christian doctrines based upon it, is undertaken in his *History of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, 1903.

"nature." By that term is here meant the sum of the endowments with which the child is born, the mental "faculties"[1] or functions *imparted* to the infant by physical heredity, as distinguished from those which are afterwards acquired only through the mediation of human suggestion and teaching. The line between these two classes of mental qualities cannot, of course, be traced with exactness or completeness. The infant's mental birth-inheritance does not consist entirely of already crystallised instincts and functions. There are also present, no doubt, the germs of faculties which are destined to develop unaided from without, such as the capacity to apprehend objects. These, however, are probably of no concern to our present inquiry. Again, it is not possible for an infant to rear itself apart from human society, and therefore it is impossible for us to ascertain by observation what mental powers and functions would be possessed by such a child; but we shall see presently that some of those faculties which are most characteristic of man would certainly not be evolved, and these cannot therefore be included in the infant's heritage or be regarded as belonging to its "nature," as defined above.

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[1] The use of the convenient terminology of "faculty psychology" may be allowed, I trust, for the very reason that the faulty theory which gave rise to it is so completely abandoned.

What then do psychologists, who have studied the infant mind, find to be the constitution of human experience during the first epoch of mental life? No one, of course, believes now, if indeed anyone did in Locke's time, in innate ideas. There is no such complex furniture in the infant's mind at birth as the general idea; even what Kant called the forms of intuition, space and time, modern psychology has shown to be the outcome of elaborate synthesis. The infant's experience begins in raw sensations, feelings of pleasure and pain, and the motor adaptations to which these lead.[1] With these, and with the latent germs of the faculties of perception and thought, which cannot be observed but which must be assumed in order to account for the development of the child into the man, we have no concern. There remain only the congenital instincts and appetites. By an "instinct" the psychologist now generally means an original, innate tendency of consciousness to express itself in a particular adaptive bodily action, in response to some particular and definite stimulus from without. The word has often been used more loosely, so as to include activities which are cases of imitation and rapid learning; but such psychologists as restrict its application to the type of action defined above are agreed that in man the instincts are relatively few. Their paucity secures greater adaptability and capacity for high mental development. And most of the infant's instincts come to an end with the rise of volition.

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[1] Professor J. M. Baldwin, *Mental Development in the Child and the Race*, p. 17.

Inasmuch as instincts are automatic, consciousness being present at all instinctive actions only as a spectator, as it were, and not as a guide, it is obvious that no ethical attribute, such as "good" or "bad," can be applied to them, or, at least, to the infant for possessing them. Moreover, they are necessary to life, and therefore cannot be looked upon as something alien to the "essence" of human nature, the result of its corruption through a Fall.

Nor can we discover any sign of hereditary taint about the appetites which every human being inherits. Neither their mere presence nor their intensity can be regarded as a sign of the derangement of man's nature. Appetites are organic needs craving satisfaction. Their presence or absence is never, from first to last, dependent on volition; they cannot be stifled or eradicated, that is, by voluntary effort. The satisfaction of the appetites of hunger and thirst, indeed, is as necessary to life as is that of the need of air or sleep or warmth. The appetite of sex, which is not developed in early childhood, is not necessary, like those of hunger and thirst, to the life of the individual; but it is essential to the life of the species. The mere possession of appetites, then, which are admittedly the most general occasions of human sin and sinfulness, is not a proof of defection from original righteousness; and indeed this has not often been asserted to be the case.[1] If there is any touch of original sin about them, it must be connected not with their existence but with their intensity. It has frequently been argued, with some plausibility, by advocates of the doctrine of original sin, that the animal appetites of mankind are more vehement than is necessary to normal and healthy human nature, that the pleasure which accompanies their satisfaction is inordinate, and is a result of that disturbance of the balance between flesh and spirit in which is seen one of the consequences of the Fall. But since we have come to believe in the animal origin of man's physical nature, we are compelled to regard these appetites, with all their intensity, as survivals whose presence is inevitable and a part of the course of Nature; and scientific students of infancy tell us that they are necessary, in their full power, to life or health or growth, or to the subsequent realisation of distinctively human mental qualities. The infant, for some months, is indeed wholly under the sway of its inborn tendencies. Its experience, we are told, is at first entirely constituted by blank sensations and feelings of pleasure and pain.[1] It is a sentient automaton, adapted for parasitic dependence upon its environment. The intensity of the young child's appetites is, biologically, a sign of future health and vigour, and its apparent faults or signs of corruption are organic necessities.

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[1] Such a view seems to have been held by Gregory of Nyssa (*De Virginitate*, c. 12; *De Homin. opific.* cc. 16, 17, etc.), and, before him, by the author of *The Apocalypse oj Baruch.*

As the infant grows, it is stimulated by pleasant or painful feeling to form habits.

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[1] Baldwin, *loc. cit.*

It is both physiologically and psychologically true that the repetition of an action makes that action easier. And as the function of will emerges and develops, this too contributes to the formation of such habits. Only one sanction is as yet known to the infant—that of success; the knowledge of good and evil has not yet emerged. The formation, therefore, of the earliest habits is a non-moral phenomenon. Doubtless the young child sometimes presents an ugly spectacle of apparent selfishness in the satisfaction of its appetites, and of passionate resentment to restraint on their indulgence. But in such behaviour it is only following its "nature." Children's dislike of restraint upon pleasure, until developed intelligence discerns its reasonableness, is both natural and inevitable.

Thus the infant, simply as man, and not necessarily as fallen man, possesses propensities which, as soon as his moral life begins, must of necessity plunge him into an arduous and never-ending struggle if he is to order himself as a rational and moral being. The animal ancestry of mankind, the very means by which God has willed that the human race should come into being, is responsible for elements in our inherited nature common with those of the brutes—elements of "the ape and tiger"; and we cannot speak of these elements, any more than we can speak of the habits or instincts of the lower animals, as things which "ought not to be." We can only say of them that they ought not, as the child grows up, to remain "unmoralised,"[1] and that their non-moralisation constitutes sin.

It is to be admitted, then, that all children inherit the tendencies of the stock; but it has been shown that there is no reason to see in these tendencies, either in their existence or in their intensity, any fault or corruption of nature, any sign of dislocation or derangement or deprivation such as is asserted by the doctrine of original sin. It remains further to add that, in any case, these tendencies could not be regarded as of the nature of "sin," unless we agreed to rob ethical terms of their ethical significance. The term "Sin," and its derivatives, can surely only be applied to the issues of the *will*. We speak, indeed, of good and bad states, and of good and bad characters; but a moral state or a character is the result of voluntary action. If we apply the term sinful to hereditary temperament, to natural impulses or appetites as such, we must not only commit ourselves to a Manichæan doctrine of evil, but also, if we would be logical, must apply ethical terms to the conduct of the brute creation. In scientific theology it is most desirable to banish all such expressions as "sinful flesh," "sinful passions," "sinful" or "sinless" nature; for the things described as sinful or sinless are only so describable in a loose, incorrect manner, and such use of language only introduces obscurity, confusion, and inaccuracy into the discussion of questions which it is of importance to handle only with language of scientific precision.

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[1] I have borrowed the expression "moralisation" in this context from Prof. J. Seth's *Ethical Principles* (5th ed., p. 233, etc.). It is intended to describe the bringing of the instincts and passions under the constraint of moral law, the refusal to indulge them for mere self-gratification, and the partial or complete inhibition of them in accordance with ends dictated by reason and morality.

We have seen, then, so far, that the inborn tendencies of the child are natural and non-moral. We may add that they are likewise neutral as regards promise of subsequent ethical outcome. They are the raw material out of which good as well as evil, virtue as well as vice, may be hewn and shaped. They are indifferent stuff, awaiting moralisation. The fear that is natural to all men is the basis alike of cowardice and of the highest courage, which is by no means identical with fearlessness: the natural emotion of anger is the source of righteous wrath as well as of vindictive passion. Our virtues and vices have common roots; and what shall grow from those roots depends on the action of the will alone.

We conclude, then, that in its earliest period the child's life is wholly innocent of actual sin or inborn sinfulness. Its appetites are blind, rather of the nature of wants than of conscious desires; action is not purposive, even when adaptive, but simply an automatic response to stimulus, and is therefore non-moral. In following its impulses, whithersoever they lead, the infant is as yet only fulfilling the law of its being. Thus the ecclesiastical doctrine of original sin is to be repudiated entirely as a key to the problem of the origin of sin in the individual child. In the first place it must be asserted that what is inherited or original is not sin or taint but non-moral qualities; further, that this inheritance is not due to a fall of the race which has damaged the moral constitution of mankind, but is the necessary outcome of the regular course of Nature; and lastly, that our inheritance of stock-tendencies is not to be traced to the first human parent of our race as a first cause, but to the non-human ancestry which preceded him.

If, then, there is no corruption or derangement in our inherited nature derived from a catastrophic first sin of the head of the race and forming the source of our actual sin, we have to seek for the origin of the sinfulness of the individual in his own conscious, volitional action. It is not necessary to discuss here how volition—the first pre-requisite of moral life — arises and develops in the child. Indeed merely to summarise the stages which psychologists of infancy, such as Professor Baldwin, have traced in the appearance of the several factors of volition, namely, desire, attentive deliberation and effort, would require considerable space. Let it suffice to say that psychology has made it plain that voluntary activity is gradually evoked or acquired; that for a considerable period the infant is without self-decision, and indeed for sometime destitute of self-consciousness: that the child's earliest conduct is consequently entirely non-moral, and, in fact, largely mechanical or automatic.

But volition is not the only pre-requisite for the possibility of sin. We do not blame the apparent cruelty or greediness of an infant, any more than we attribute sinfulness to the actions of a cat; we say: "they know no better." Until a child "knows better," until he has acquired, at least a rudimentary conception of the moral law and its content, some moral sense and moral sentiment, he cannot condemn his own actions or understand how or why others can condemn them; he cannot be guilty of sin. Without law there is no sin, only innocence. In other words, sin becomes first a possibility when the child has acquired moral personality.

And this it does through what is called social heredity. Conscience is made, not born; or, rather, it is given. It is obtained by the child from its human environment. The growth of human personality, and especially of moral personality, has been found to be pre-eminently a matter of social suggestion. The child grows into the adult only by drawing upon the store of accomplished activities, forms, and patterns, which society already possesses. It is difficult to see how the human child could ever rise above the life of impulse, ever recognise rightness or wrongness in its conduct, if enforced obedience did not reveal to it another life. It is social heredity which makes the child human in all except the zoological sense, and without education an infant would remain, so far as moral consciousness is concerned, much at the level of the inferior animals. It is in the light of this fact of social heredity, rather than in that of the theory of a physically inherited corruption of nature, that we see the significance of Christian baptism: the initiation of the child into the atmosphere of Christian influence and teaching.

Psychologists tell us that, roughly and generally speaking, the awakening of the moral faculty occurs somewhere about the age of three years. The rudimentary stage of conscience is called out chiefly by enforced obedience to commands—obedience compelled by punishments. At first the young child cannot understand the law which it is called upon to obey. It cannot in the least predict, until it has learned by experience to do so, what actions will be forbidden and what will not. For a long time it blunders in its endeavours to find out. It gradually learns the content of the moral law, however, partly by instruction and correction, partly by imitation, and, later, by reflection. Thus there grows up, very slowly, a moral ideal, whose fulness enlarges as experience widens. This ideal is at first embodied in the parent or instructor, and afterwards in God. At first "good" is simply what is permitted, "evil" what is forbidden; but at last the abstract ideas of goodness and badness are comprehended, and dissociated from their concrete embodiments. The great part played by imitation in moulding the moral ideal of youth is best illustrated by the life of the school, with its "tone" or aggregate of sanctions, some of which we recognise as arbitrary when we outgrow our childhood. At a later stage of youth, hero-worship plays an important part in framing our moral ideals. But from first to last the content of the moral law is learned from environment. And when conscience has thus been sufficiently developed to enable the child, unaided, to condemn its own actions, it ceases to be innocent with the innocence of good and evil. Now, for the first time, sin becomes a possibility; for there is no sin without a law and an apprehension of the claims of law.[1] Henceforth the tendency to satisfy all desires as they come, a tendency hitherto natural and inevitable and sinless, meets with the check of a law which the child has learned to regard as something within itself. The newly-made moral agent has now much to unlearn, much to subdue. Sin does not begin, with the individual any more than with the race, in going out of the way to commit what is strange and alien to the whole of past experience, but in failing to alter or to abandon forms of conduct which have already become habitual and which, once forbidden, are thenceforth regarded as wrong.

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[1] This I must insist upon in spite of opposition. Where "sin" is not the correlative of "guilt" or "blame," another term should be used. Imperfection and sin are widely different concepts.

And so the moral life is a race in which every child starts handicapped. The pleasures of forms of conduct which are destined to be forbidden him have been tasted and known; pleasure-giving actions have already become forged into chains of habit; the expulsive power of the new affection which is to establish another rule cannot at first be strongly felt. When will and conscience enter, it is into a land already occupied by a powerful foe. And, in the opening stages of the moral life, higher motives cannot, from the very circumstances of the case, appeal so strongly as the lower and more accustomed already in possession. Into the "seething and tumultuous life of natural tendency, of appetite and passion, affection and desire" is introduced the new-born moral purpose, which must struggle to win the ascendancy. And this fact would seem to supply a sufficient explanation of the universality of human sinfulness. Not that sin is to be excused, in any stage of development either of the race or of the individual; sin is sin, though the avoiding of it be stupendously difficult. But the absence of a single case of absolutely sinless life among the sons of men is no marvel that needs to be violently accounted for, as the human mind has long striven to do, by means of a catastrophic fall in this world or another.

The source of sin in the earliest stage of the child's moral life, and the only *fomes peccati* at that period, is the appetites and impulses arising from within: it is "the flesh." But the child's world soon widens, and new occasions for failure in the realisation of the moral self come from without. The social heredity which, as we have seen, makes the child a moral being is also responsible for many of his occasions, indeed many of his temptations, to sin. For the society in which the child sooner or later finds himself is itself more or less morally imperfect, or corrupt, and the examples, the conventions, the moral traditions and influences which it transmits to the child are tainted; it suggests evil, sanctions evil, encourages evil. The expansion of the child's own intellectual life also, and its growing experience, supplies new inducements to evil, and more and more possibilities for evil. "He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow." Thought transmutes the primary human appetites, making them centres of complicated desires and ambitions. Reason indeed gives larger scope for selfishness than mere instinct, and enormously extends the field which morality has to conquer. The whole intellectual life, as well as our mere sensibility, needs to be moralised, to be claimed for God and devoted to Him. And further, the nexus of human relationships ever grows larger and more complicated; and here again is increased scope for falling short of the ideal, for doing what ought not to be done, and leaving undone what ought to be done.

It will be obvious that the sin which is most likely to beset the child most importunately at the commencement of its moral life must be disobedience. In the first place, it will be unable then to recognise that the forbidden act is in itself sinful, apart from the fact that it is prohibited by the parent, and will only be able to look upon it as wrong because it has been forbidden; and therefore any act that is condemned as sinful will be condemned because it is an act of disobedience, whatever its nature. And secondly, obedience is necessarily the virtue which is most strenuously thrust and impressed upon the child in its earliest years. The central precept for childhood is obedience, because considerable docility and submissiveness, being the one condition for learning other virtues, is required before all else. Hence it is that laxity in bringing up and weakness in indulging the waywardness, which ought to be strictly coerced, in a young child are of the utmost danger to the child's moral well-being, and in a very literal and very serious sense "spoil" the child. Perhaps the next most serious error in parental education of childhood is the strict enforcement of obedience without the painstaking endeavour, in every crossing of the child's will, every punishment inflicted upon him, and every appeal addressed to him, to enlist his judgment, his affection and his respect on the side of the law which is being upheld, in so far as the reason and moral beauty of that law is comprehensible to the childish mind. Coercion which is arbitrary and vacillating, now strictly insisting on compliance and now weakly giving way, is only calculated to destroy the child's sense of the gravity and binding nature of the moral law.

So far, in discussing the morality of childhood, we have spoken of moral evil rather than of sin.[1] The reason is that the child's earliest "lawlessness" is transgression of human law rather than of law which is recognised as divine. But the child of Christian parentage is at a very early age taught to think of God, and to regard all its conduct as open before Him and performed with reference to Him. And the child is usually in very intimate relationship with the God in whom it has readily been taught to believe. The relation is generally not so much one of awe as of intimacy, although the religious life of the young child generally influences profoundly its sense of right and wrong, and invests all breaches of duty with a strong sense of sin. Wrong-doing, therefore, very soon becomes identified with sin, and disobedience to a parent, for instance, with disobedience to God. Thenceforward religion becomes a motive-power to right conduct and supplies depth and inwardness to the sense of sin and guilt; the sinfulness of sin becomes more apparent, and the transgression of moral law more serious. From this stage, however, the sinfulness of the child approximates in all essentials to the sinfulness of the adult person, and there is no need to prosecute further an investigation such as has here been undertaken.

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[1] For the purposes of this essay, sin and evil are interchangeable terms. The one is the ethical, the other the religious and theological, expression for conscious transgression of moral law. When the law transgressed is identified with the Divine Will, its transgression is generally called "sin."

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V

THE CONVERSION OF CHILDREN

THE word Conversion is used in a narrower and a wider sense. In the narrower sense it means a turning from sin to God, and is to be distinguished from justification and regeneration, carrying in it a strong, active, human element. In this strict meaning it cannot be applied to children in the pre-natal and infant states. In the wider sense it denotes the whole process by which a man is made a true Christian, the change, objective and subjective, which takes place when he becomes a sincere follower of the Lord Jesus. This is the sense it usually bears both in colloquial and theological speech, and in this sense only can it be applied to children.

Therefore this is the meaning it will bear in the present article.

I

The great bulk of theologians, Roman and Protestant, agree in emphasising the doctrine of original sin, which means that men are born in a sinful condition. They differ in their explanation of the doctrine; but there is substantial agreement as to the central fact, that every child begins his earthly career with a tainted nature. They teach over and above the unwholesomeness of the surroundings, the depravation of the nature, the evil bias of the human soul. Men are born in sin, a fact undisputed by all serious students of the Bible and of humanity. But here a question emerges: What is intended by the affirmation that all men are born sinners? What is sin? Sin is always and everywhere composed of two elements, guilt and depravity. The doctrine, therefore, is that children are born guilty and depraved, guilt lying on them, defilement dwelling in them. It is of no consequence what poetry says on the subject; the question is, What does the Bible teach? If our view is correct, it is self-evident that without Conversion, no one, be he man or child, shall see the kingdom of heaven.

(1) Let us consider the first element—guilt. Admitting that Holy Writ teaches original sin, does it teach original guilt? The classical passage bearing on this question is Rom. v. 12–18. Whatever obscurities lie in it, its main tenor is clear—St Paul is proving the guilt of all men, young and old, from the fact that all men suffer the penalty of guilt, to wit, death. It is an argument from the effect to the cause, from the universality of the punishment to the universality of the guilt. Children, who have not sinned according to the similitude of Adam's transgression, die. If they die, thus suffering the penalty of sin, they must have sinned — sinned in a pre-temporal state according to Origen, in a super-temporal state according to Julius

Müller, in Adam according to the evangelical divines. Accordingly, all children are born in a state of guilt, and consequently of condemnation.

Guilt, however, is divisible into two elements: personal blameworthiness (*reatus culpæ*), and liability to punishment (*reatus pœnæ*). Do children labour under this twofold guilt? In the answer returned, orthodox and evangelical writers differ much. Those who follow the lead of St Augustine adopt the extreme view, that the unconscious babe is personally blameworthy as well as liable to suffer death, the announced penalty of transgression. "Death passed upon all men, for that all sinned" (aorist tense), indicating that all are partakers, not only in the consequences, but also in the commission of sin. Hence individual culpability, implying personal guilt. Others hold a more moderate view, that children are not by nature personally blameworthy, but that in virtue of their racial and federal union with Adam they suffer the legal penalty of transgression. Denying their moral guilt, they maintain their forensic liability to suffer the punishment due for sin.

The milder view, concerning which there is no controversy among theologians, though considered inadequate by many, is adopted here, because evidently the Scriptures teach it. They may possibly teach the Augustinian view; they certainly teach the more moderate view. If there be any point to the Apostle's argument, it is that death has passed upon all men, even children, in consequence of Adam's disobedience. It may, of course, be held that death is only a natural event, without any moral significance, totally unconnected with sin, inevitable in the human race as in vegetable and animal organisms; and that as death reigned in the animal world before the Fall, so death in the human world cannot be the consequence of the Fall. But whilst everybody will admit that death in the vegetable and animal kingdoms is a natural event, independent of sin, we must, on the other hand, contend that in Scriptural teaching death among men is viewed as the effect of sin—not merely a calamity but a punishment. Had Adam continued in his integrity, his posterity would not have died. But "death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Infants die. Why? Not because the physical machinery is worn out, but because all lie under the guilt in the limited sense that all are liable to suffer the penalty due for disobedience. The how and the why, the mode and the reason, lie outside the circle of our present discussion; we are concerned simply about the facts. Objections may be raised against the organic or federal constitution of humanity—in favour of individualism and against collectivism; in favour of singularity and against solidarity; and though they may destroy our argument, they make no difference in the facts—these still remain. Men, young and old, are born into the world liable at any moment to bear the penalty of sin.

(2) In addition to the guilt of sin in the sense already defined, men are born with the possession, not of a corrupt, but of a corrupted nature; not only with original guilt, but also with original depravity. "We were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. ii. 3). What is the precise signification of the phrase "by nature"? The same word is used in Rom. xi. 21: "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee." The natural branches are those which grow of themselves out of the root, containing in themselves all the qualities of the root, in contradistinction from the branches grafted by art and which may be of a different quality from the tree into which they are imbedded. Similarly should be understood, in our opinion, the sentence, "By nature children of wrath, even as others." If all the apples on the tree are crabbed and sour, they are so by nature, having derived their excessive acidity from the root. And our defilement is congenital, not a mishap

or an accident occurring in the course of our development. Whether the doctrine of original depravity is the same as the modern doctrine of heredity does not affect our argument — we think it is different. For according to the principle of heredity depravity should increase with the roll of the centuries, the river of evil increasing in volume and momentum in proportion as it receives new tributaries, thereby cutting a deeper channel for its onflow in the world. Besides, hereditary evil varies, whereas original sin is a uniform quantity, the same in the child born yesterday as in the child born the first year after the Fall, neither greater nor less. Original sin implies that human nature is polluted beyond the power of self-purification.

No phrase has been more prominent in the discussion of this subject than that of "total depravity." What did Augustine, Calvin, and their equally able followers intend by it? Evidently that man by nature is destitute of all goodness, and has in him the seed of all vice. The Westminster Confession, the standard of orthodoxy in Calvinistic churches, teaches that our first parents "became dead in sins and *wholly* defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body," and that "they convey the same death in sin and corrupted nature to all their posterity." The (United) Free Church of Scotland recently receded from that extreme position, making "total depravity" to mean, not total in intensity, but total in extent, *i.e.* that no part of our nature has escaped the contagion of evil. According to the modern interpretation it does not signify that human nature because of original sin is as bad as it might possibly be, but that in every faculty it has been tainted with badness. How then came Augustine, Calvin, and their followers to emphasise the extreme view? Doubtless by overlooking the fact that no man is born in a state of mere nature. If men were born in a state of mere nature the extreme Augustinian interpretation would be true. But though true logically and in the abstract, it is not true historically and in the concrete—grace commingles with nature from the first instant of the Fall. That was the case with our first parents. They did not have to bear the full penalty of their transgression, were not permitted to fall into irremediable evil, physical and moral. Divine Grace instantly intervened.

No sooner did they transgress than the protoevangel was proclaimed. They fell from the Covenant of Works into the Covenant of Grace. Sin was not allowed to work its havoc on them or in them; had it been, it would have effected total depravity in intensity as well as in extent. In their objective or legal condition, alongside the sentence of condemnation lay the promise of salvation; in their subjective or heart-experience, alongside the darkness of sin shone the light of grace. Thus also in respect of their offspring. Alongside original sin is original righteousness, the former arising from the evil of human nature, the latter from the grace of the Divine Nature. By nature men are out and out sinful. But as they are not born in that state, because of the intervention of prevenient grace, they are partly good and partly bad. God in His mercy interposed, checked the downward tendency, broke the force of the Fall.

(3) This is the common grace, acknowledged by theologians of all schools, that came to men through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Is it not in this partly that the parallel between Adam and Christ as explained by St Paul consists? "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men unto condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Commentators strive to explain differently the "all men" at the conclusion of the verse from the "all men" at the beginning. It appears, nevertheless, that "all men" benefited by Christ are co-extensive with "all men" injured by Adam. As all men fell under the condemnation consequent

on Adam's guilt without personal blameworthiness, so they are delivered from that condemnation by the righteousness of Christ without personal faith. Thus the righteousness of the Redeemer counteracts original guilt. It follows that as no one is damned for original sin, only for personal sin, so no one who grows into years of responsibility is justified without the exercise of active faith. Therefore the view here advocated involves universal salvation so far as infants who die in their early years are concerned, but not the universal salvation of adults—they must, by the exercise of faith in the Saviour, voluntarily accept deliverance. Salvation is thus co-extensive with the Fall, automatic in respect of those who die before being able to discern between good and evil, but dependent upon its willing acceptance by men of mature age.

What about original sin viewed as depravity ? As original sin viewed as guilt is counteracted by the righteousness of Christ, so, considered as corruption, it is neutralised by the Spirit of Christ, and this also automatically in the case of children dying under the age of responsibility. Every child, being a sinner in the double sense, needs to be saved in the double sense—he must be justified and he must be regenerated. How he is justified we have already shown—automatically by the righteousness of Christ. He must also be regenerated by the infusion of a new principle of spiritual life. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Hence the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Ghost. It is a debatable question whether in adult life regeneration is wholly passive or partly passive and partly active. But concerning those who die in infancy there is no room for controversy — regeneration must be wholly passive. It is entirely the work of the Spirit. But can the Holy Spirit regenerate an infant in whom consciousness has not been awakened? The answer must be in the affirmative. Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and

Samuel were sanctified from the womb. It is possible for men to be "born again" before they are born the first time, born with the "holy seed" in them alongside the corrupt seed. As evidence of the power of the Spirit to sanctify embryonic human nature it is permissible to adduce the Incarnation. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee: therefore the Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). He was a Thing before He was a Person. But the Thing was holy—exempt from original sin, just as the Person was holy—free from actual sin. It was the function of the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation to sanctify human nature in its rudimentary elements. And what He did in the case of Christ He can do still. He is able to regenerate human nature in the unconscious babe, and this He actually does in the case of all those who die before crossing the boundary line of accountability.

What then is the condition of those who

die in infancy? The answers returned by the churches have been hesitating and diverse. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that all baptized children are saved, all unbaptized lost. That is the direct positive teaching of the Council of Trent, which in this followed the belief of patristic and mediæval theology. Protestantism at the outset probably adopted the Roman teaching. The Augsburg Confession, drawn up by Melanchthon and acquiesced in by Luther and others, regarded baptism as indispensable to deliverance from punishment due for original sin. Baptized infants were saved; the unbaptized were consigned to perdition. Gradually, however, the extreme view became modified and softened, not so much by any positive doctrinal statement as by a gradual permeation of the mind by the gentleness and tenderness of the Christian religion. First, whilst believing that baptized children, dying in infancy, were saved, the fate of the unbaptized was left open, the Protestant Confessions making no pronouncement upon the subject. Then the churches made an advance,—whilst believing as heretofore in the salvation of baptized infants, they tentatively held the salvation of all children of Christian parentage, baptized and unbaptized. But the children of unbelievers and of heathen lands were still left to perish. Next, in proportion as the conception of God's Fatherhood and Christ's Brotherhood pervaded Christian theology and experience, the idea gained currency that all children, dying under the age of responsibility, are without exception heirs of salvation.

The prevalent belief now is that no one is damned except for personal transgression. No hell for original sin. Thereby the doctrine is much relieved of the forbidding aspect it at first presents, being counterbalanced by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, which redemption flings back its healing influence to the beginning of history as well as forward to the end of time (Heb. ix. 26). This teaching relieves the darkness of the Fall and neutralises many of its dire consequences. Statistics, it is said, prove that the majority of men born in Christian lands die before reaching the age of responsibility; how much truer is it of barbarous countries? The conclusion is therefore justified that the large majority of the human race are already saved. As Christianity extends its dominions the number of the saved will proportionately increase. It is not the few who are saved and the many lost; rather the many are saved, and only the few—the few in comparison — are doomed to destruction. The Divine character will emerge untarnished out of the history of sin, original and actual.

II

We now move on to consider Conversion in its relation to growing boys and girls. We have seen that all children are born in a state partly of nature and partly of grace, which means that evil and good commingle in their hearts. In so far as they are evil they are antagonistic to the Divine; in so far as they are good they are in sympathy with it. The question now fairly confronts us, Do they need Conversion at all? The answer without hesitation is, Conversion is a change absolutely necessary in all sinners alike, be they young or old, moral or prodigal, in order to their salvation. "Except one be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). That is the rule, and to it there is no exception. Unless converted in the pre-natal or the infant state, conversion in the growing lads and maidens is an essential condition of their salvation. No man at birth is left entirely in the hands of his inherited evil nature, else the human would sink at once to the level of the demoniac. Grace has intervened to secure in the initial stage, not the salvation, but the salvability, of the race. The original light was not allowed to be wholly extinguished nor the original goodness to be wholly obliterated. Nevertheless darkness and evil are the preponderating forces unless checked by discipline, education, and especially by religion.

In other words, human nature from the womb inclines uniformly away from God and in the direction of evil. The inclination is not so much as it might be; nevertheless it is away from the perpendicular, and only the prevenient grace of God keeps it from lying prostrate in the mire. This prevenient or common grace does not suffice to reverse the inclination. How, then, can that be done? How to secure the victory to the good over the bad propensities? Manifestly by Conversion, the result not of the common grace in which all participate, but of the special saving grace of the Gospel. Now what is included in this process named Conversion? Two things, as already shown: setting child or man right in his objective relations, and setting him right in his subjective contents—justification and regeneration.

(1) Let us consider the grace of Justification, the first essential of salvation in all sinners of all ages. Children are not saved any more than grown-up men without being first

justified. This presupposes that children, like adults, are under the condemnation of the Adamic sin — no one can escape from the responsibilities of his race. Racial unity and solidarity is a fact, a greater fact than individuality and multiplicity. From the personal standpoint objections may be urged that it is not just or fair. All the same the fact remains, the deepest, stubbornest fact in our history. How to escape the penalty following the racial guilt? In the case of babes dying in infancy, their justification, we have seen, is automatic in virtue of the redemption in Christ Jesus. As their guilt is racial, not personal, so the descent of the Lord Christ into the race by Incarnation and Atonement suffices to cancel the guilt, that is, to effect their justification. But, in respect of those who grow into boyhood and girlhood, in whom the personal element plays an active and important part, faith is an indispensable condition. *They* must be justified by faith. But can children believe? It is children who can believe, and if men of mature age are to become believers, it must be by the resumption of the child nature (Mark x. 15). All children believe till their moral nature receives a shock by the discovery of falsehood in the circle of their acquaintance. Certain Christian "gifts" transcend the child-mind, but the Christian "graces," each and all, lie fairly within their reach. In 1 Corinthians xii. St Paul enumerates the "gifts"—knowledge, power to work miracles, ability to speak with tongues. Then he specifies the "graces," which abide always in the Church, and ought to be the possession of every Christian of every age and condition. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three." These graces abide after the gifts have vanished. The gifts are the accidentals, the graces the essentials of Christianity. Whilst the gifts have always been the possession of the few, the graces may be the possession of all, of the children as well as of the parents, of the illiterate as well as of the learned. Youth is pre-eminently the age of faith, hope, and charity. Unbelief, pessimism, uncharitableness belong to a later stage in our upward path; nay, not upward, but downward; not in our progress, but in our retrogression. Children are nearer heaven than their seniors.

In order, however, that childhood's faith may be Christian, the child-mind must be directed to the revelation of God in Christ. There are thousands of boys and girls to-day justified by faith. The sense of guilt and shamefacedness in the presence of God has been removed; they are children in their Father's house, enjoying the liberty and confidence of children. They are strangers to the agony of conviction, because they met God in Bethlehem and on Calvary before they beheld Him on Sinai. Happy they who have escaped the earthquake!

(2) The other element is Regeneration. The child-nature is beautifully pourtrayed by the poets; one would almost imagine it was sinless. God forbid that the picture should be

tarnished; but loyalty to facts demands that it should be stated that the poets present only one side of the shield. Vaughan, the Silurian, in the seventeenth century, describes himself as he idly played in sight of the Brecon beacons:—

Happy those early days when I shined in my angel-infancy,
Before I understood this place appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy aught but a white, celestial thought;
When yet I had not walked above a mile or two from my first love,
And, looking back—at that short space—could see a glimpse of His bright face;
When on some gilded cloud or flower my gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound my conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense a several sin to every sense;
But felt, through all this fleshly dress, bright shoots of everlastingness.

From testimonies such as this, hasty thinkers draw the inference that Conversion in the broad sense of change of state and of nature is not necessary — education is all that is required. But poetry, though containing truth, should never be the basis of a creed—we must look upon one truth in its relation to every other truth. "Bright shoots of everlastingness." But they were only "shoots," not the full-orbed light, shoots which presuppose the darkness through which they penetrate. Social amenities under the loving care and approving smile of parents please with the bloom of innocence. But we should never forget that deep in the subsoil are deposited seeds of evil, which will presently sprout and work their way upward to the light, and it will be only by the most stringent supervision that they will be prevented from overshadowing the virtuous growths, and only by Divine grace in regeneration the seeds themselves will be destroyed. Education may mow down the thistles and weeds; regeneration alone can uproot them. A few theorists, contemplating human nature, say, "The maid sleepeth," and believe they can prescribe educational remedies that will restore her to wakefulness and health. The Bible, looking at it, says, "She is dead, dead in trespasses and sins," dead in its relation to God and holiness. Social virtues may live and thrive; education will to them prove helpful. But love of God and holiness cannot be evolved; it must be "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

Seeing that pollution is propagated by natural generation, cannot goodness, holiness, the spiritual life be transmitted in like manner? If evil fathers by necessity of nature beget wicked children, do not godly parents by the same necessity beget pious children? It is a knotty question and difficult to unravel. But to those who accept the testimony of Scripture as final the answer is clear: No, godly parents do not pass on their godliness to their offspring. Some claim that virtue, like vice, runs in the blood, and is transmissible by generation. That there is a degree of truth in the contention is certain. Assuredly moral qualities, as well as intellectual and physical, do descend from ancestors to posterity. A moral resemblance is observable in successive generations springing from the same family stock. But in loyalty to Bible teaching it must be maintained that spiritual life in every soul is the direct production of the Divine Spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "Except ye be born from above ye cannot see the kingdom of God." "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." These passages declare clearly that, whereas generation is of man, regeneration is of God.

The question, however, lurks suspiciously in many a mind: Can the Spirit regenerate children? We ask: Why not? We have seen that He can regenerate infants without the intervention of means. What is to hinder Him to effect the same change in our growing sons and daughters by the use of means, such as the New Testament sacraments, the established order of Christian ordinances, and school and family instruction? Headmasters of our public schools declare fearlessly their belief in the conversion of many of their pupils, who bear witness to the renewing of their minds by the brightness of their lives, the promptness of their obedience, and the subjugation of their corporeal and mental natures to the requirements of the moral. That the precise date and place of their conversion cannot be fixed militates not a whit against its genuineness. The change may be, and probably is, gradual; and the gradualness excludes definiteness of date. In the public discussion of this aspect of the question, an aged Welsh saint delivered himself in this wise: You know such and such persons who follow the trade of shoemaking. They were apprenticed to my father. They can fix the date when they started shoemaking—all was entered in their indentures. I also am by trade a shoemaker. If you ask me when I began I cannot tell you, for I was brought up in it. But though I cannot fix the date of my apprenticeship, everybody knows I am as good a shoemaker as any of them. Thus with true godliness. St Paul could fix the date of his conversion, a great persecutor that he had been. But if you inquired of Timothy the time he became a Christian, he would make answer: I cannot tell—I was brought up in it. But he was as genuine a Christian as the Apostle.

(3) The question still remains: What can churches and parents do to bring about the conversion of the children? Does baptism truly, really effect regeneration? The answer depends upon the meaning attached to the latter term. If by it is intended that the baptized child is thereby admitted as a member of the household of God, to enjoy its privileges and claim its rights, the answer must be in the

affirmative. That, it is contended, is the sense in which the word is used in the baptismal service of the Church of England,—not as signifying a change of heart, but a change of condition, the translation of the child from the world to the Church, from the power of darkness to the kingdom of Christ. Consequently, every baptized infant should be considered a child of God, and trained up to the privileges and responsibilities of his high station. By the very rite of baptism the child in his external relationship is no longer a child of the devil but of God, a rightful member of the Divine family. By baptism he obtains the status of sonship; it is another matter whether he possess the spirit of sonship.

This involves two things. First, that the Church—any church—by the administration of baptism undertakes the responsibility of training the child in the high privileges and duties of his Christian status. Do the churches fulfil their obligations? Secondly, that the child should be often reminded of the Covenant privileges to which he was introduced, and the noble, exalted duties to the performance of which he was pledged in baptism. The knowledge of their status in Christ Jesus will awake in youthful minds a sense of dignity corresponding to their exalted position. Does baptism find its proper place and function in Christian instruction? Have we not read in ancient Church history of a saint, much tempted and sorely tried, who recovered his stability and assurance by calling to mind his baptism, when he entered into Covenant obligations to God and God entered into Covenant obligations to him? Whatever was doubtful in his history, his baptism was an indisputable fact to which he anchored himself, and as a consequence his faith was steadied and his hope brightened. Whatever befell him, he knew God would prove faithful to His Covenant obligations in baptism.

Another meaning, however, is attached to the term Regeneration, namely, an inward change corresponding to the outward, the implantation of the new life in the heart. Whilst the patristic theologians usually give it the objective meaning—adoption into the family of God—the Puritan and Nonconformist divines ascribe to it a subjective meaning—not a change of condition but a change of heart. The Church of Rome uses the term to cover the two meanings; according to it the child by baptism is made objectively and subjectively a child of God. What the precise views of the Church of England are it is difficult to ascertain. In the baptismal service the objective interpretation seems to occupy the forefront, that by baptism the child receives admission into the household of God. But in the Articles the subjective meaning is chiefly emphasised, that the principle of the new life is thereby deposited in the heart. Doubtless if the rite of baptism came up to the New Testament ideal, fulfilling the Christian conception, the two meanings would coalesce, and thus form a complete, full-orbed truth.

But does it realise its ideal? Are the conditions fulfilled? Solid facts give a negative reply. The majority of the baptized grow up in utter indifference to their spiritual interests; many drift into profligacy and shameless immorality, giving a flat contradiction to the dogma that they were renewed in the inner man in the "laver of regeneration." There is a birth of water which is not a birth of the Spirit. Alas! that a sacrament instituted by the Lord Jesus Himself should, having the form of godliness, lose the power thereof.

Enough has been said to show that Christianity has consecrated children by their admission into the Church, thereby giving them the status of sons and daughters in the Divine Household. They are now the children of God in a sense more special than they are the children of their earthly parents. God says to every parent: "Take this child and nurse it for Me, and I will give thee thy wages." This has revolutionised the whole conception of childhood, and invested it with a dignity unknown to pre-Christian ages. It is a striking fact that, whereas most Christian poets linger with loving fondness on their early experiences, the classic poets of Greece and Rome hardly make any allusion to them. They seem as if they were ashamed that they had ever been children. Why this difference? Is it not that in times anterior to the Incarnation children possessed no rights, and therefore had but few joys. Parents slaughtered their children without pity or compunction. So extensively did this cruel custom prevail that Augustus appealed to fathers to spare their boys for the sake of the State, and offered rewards for the observance of his entreaties. Christianity, however, has made childhood sacred, looking upon it as the period most amenable to ennobling and sanctifying influences. Childhood is more salvable than manhood. We often think otherwise. If children had grown into men, we say, we see how they could be saved. You reverse the truth, answers the Lord

Jesus; it is easier to convert children than grown-up men. Instead of making children men in order to be saved, men must be made children. They are not to grow up; you are to grow down. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Clearly probability and observation favour the Christian view. If two hundred trees are to be transplanted, half of them two years old, and the other half thirty years old, with which would we succeed best? Every gardener knows. He will transplant one hundred trees two years old and not lose one; but of the thirty-years-old trees one half will probably perish. People say: "We see how a man of thirty can be saved; but a child—what can be done with him?" The chances are all in favour of the child; he is the two-years-old tree transplanted. And yet the illustration is not four-square with the truth, for conversion means more than transplantation, denoting not only a change of situation but a change of quality in the tree. From overlooking this distinction so many people in theory and practice dispense with the aid of the Holy Spirit. Relying wholly upon education, they mistake the refinement of culture for the new life of regeneration.

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VI

THE RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF THE CHILD IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

WHEN the question is asked, What training does the Church require to be given to children? it is not very obvious what answer can be returned: for there are no rules laid down with respect to a matter which manifestly lies within the domain of domestic arrangement, and therefore lies outside the range of ecclesiastical regulation. The Church of England is justly averse to pushing official action beyond the limits indicated by the necessity of securing the indispensable elements of an ordered Christian life. In this respect the Church of England stands in marked contrast to the Church of Rome.

The difference may well be explained by the circumstances of the former as required to reflect the idiosyncrasy, and to match the needs of a nation distinguished among all nations by the intensity of its domestic life, and by the suspicion with which it regards all approaches of external authority in matters of personal or private obligation. There is properly no system of training children in religion which can claim the authority of the Church of England, but there are certain broad principles on the subject of religious education which appear to be assumed by the system of the Church itself, and which cannot possibly be left out of reckoning when honest and thoughtful members of the Church of England set themselves to answer the practical question of deciding on a system of religious education. It will appear from a calm and intelligent appreciation of the principles implied in the Anglican version of Christianity, that the tenacity which marks the attitude of Anglicans on the vexed subject of definite Christian teaching as an integra element in the education provided in the State schools at the cost of the nationa exchequer is not fairly explained as ar attempt on the part of the Anglican clerg to secure for themselves an undue authorit in the educational arrangements of the nation but must rather be regarded as the logica and necessary consequence of the principle themselves. That, in the first instance, the championship of Anglican principles shoul be undertaken by the clergy is surely neithe surprising in itself nor discreditable in the clergy. Yet the recollection of so obviou a truism would alone suffice to purge ou educational controversies of their most extravagant rhetoric and their most exasperatin invective. The fault lies (if it be a fault not with the Anglican clergy, who, in thei zealous advocacy of religious teaching in the schools are but doing their manifest duty, but with the Anglican system itself, of which they are the constituted and recognised representatives. In this paper we shall attempt to indicate what these Anglican principles are, and what are their practical applications.

I

The Church of England is an orthodox Church, that is, it accepts the version of Christianity which is the tradition of Christendom. This is not the place for anything in the nature of a theological discussion, but it is necessary to point out in a few sentences how the orthodoxy of the Church of England bears on our present argument. What, stated shortly, is orthodoxy in this connection? It must be answered that it is that version of Christ's religion which is based on that belief as to His Person, which is currently called the *Doctrine of the Incarnation.* Whatever differences of opinion may exist among Anglican Churchmen as to details of the Christian tradition with respect to the Incarnation (and we may expect that with the spread of critical methods of interpretation among the clergy, and the growth among all sections of religious people of a higher standard of doctrinal sincerity, there will be very considerable modifications of current belief in the course of the present century), there is no likelihood at all of any change in the direction of an undervaluing of what may be called its assurance of the inherent dignity and goodness of human nature. The Christian Church has parted for ever with those low views as to the natural depravity of the race, which have coloured so deeply the theology of Western Christendom, and still confuse the religious thinking of Christians. There is a well-known passage in the writings of St Irenæus, in which the significance of the Incarnation is set forth in terms very germane to our present argument. I avail myself of the late Dr Hort's excellent rendering. Writing of our Lord, this ancient and orthodox father thus expresses himself: "Being therefore a teacher, He had likewise the ages of a teacher, not rejecting or transcending man, nor breaking the law of the human race in Himself, but hallowing every age by its likeness to Himself. For He came to save all through Himself, all, I mean, who through Him are born anew unto God; infants, and little children, and boys, and youths, and elders. Accordingly, He came through every age, with infants becoming an infant, hallowing infants; among little children a little child, hallowing those of that very age, at the same time making Himself to them an example of dutifulness and righteousness and subjection; among young men a young man, becoming an example to young men, and hallowing them to the Lord. So also an elder among elders, that He might be a perfect Teacher in all things, not only as regards the setting forth of the truth, but also as regards age, at the same time hallowing also the elders, becoming likewise an example to them. Lastly, He came also even unto death, that He might be the first begotten from the dead, Himself holding the primacy in all things, the Author of life, before all things, and having precedence of all things." This language is marked by the controversial needs which it was designed to satisfy, but it is in itself extremely suggestive, and sets out a doctrine, which clearly carries the obligation, to everyone who accepts it, of treating children as from the cradle sacred, and designated as the subjects of religious influences. A Church, organising itself on the foundation of this belief, could hardly acquiesce in an educational system which appeared to rest on the contrary assumption, viz. that children were not qualified to receive religious instruction, which ought to be postponed until a later stage of life, when their intelligence would be greater and their moral nature more developed. As a matter of fact, the system of the Church has faithfully reflected the Church's belief.

II

The Church of England practises Infant Baptism, following in this particular the example of all the ancient churches of Christendom, and, in the process, pledging its members to a definite and exacting standard of duty respecting the religious education of their children. It cannot seriously be disputed that the conception of Christianity as the religion of the Incarnation really determined the adoption of the practice of baptizing children, and, it may be observed, that St Irenæus is the exponent of the very generation of Christians in which that practice appears to have become normal in the Church. Apart from the standpoint provided by that doctrine, infant baptism was on many counts objectionable. It seemed but little consistent with the Pauline notion of baptism as a Divine cleansing, given in response to repentance and faith. The paramount aspect of the Sacrament as publicly certifying a religious purpose to profess Christianity in the face of an hostile and often violently persecuting society did not easily admit of an administration of it to irresponsible and unconscious infants. There was apparent reasonableness in Tertullian's protest against baptizing children, even with the guarantees of protection and instruction given at the font by the sponsors or sureties: "The Lord says, indeed, Forbid them not to come unto Me. Let them come then while they are growing up: let them come while they are learning, while they are taught where they are coming: let them become Christians when they are able to know Christ. Why does an age which is innocent hasten to the remission of sins? There will be more caution used in worldly matters, so that one who is not trusted with earthly substance is trusted with Divine."

In the missionary stage of the Church, when the bulk of members had become such in adult life, and when, accordingly, baptism was almost everywhere bound up in men's minds with the decisive act of repentance, by which they broke with past habits of sin, and with the answering grace of forgiveness, by which they were released from the doom of everlasting punishment, those aspects of the Sacrament in which the responsible action of the individual is paramount naturally seemed most important; but as Christian families multiplied on the earth, and increasing numbers of people grew into adult life within the salutary and protected enclosure of the Christian home, then the profounder significance of the Sacrament came increasingly into view. Holy baptism was seen in connection with the supreme fact out of which the Christian society itself had grown, the Incarnation of God in Christ, and became a public and solemn affirmation, in respect of every baptized infant, of the truth—ignored and denied outside the Church, but none the less of universal significance—that human nature is intrinsically holy and immortal, derived from God and destined for God. Theories of original sin played a great part in the Augustinian and post-Augustinian theology, and they have entered deeply into the thought of Christendom, but they do not appear to have any essential connection with the Sacrament. It is not primarily as sinners that infants are baptized, but as children of God set to live in a world that ever tends to forget and desert its Author. It is not primarily in order to escape penalty that they are placed, at the very start of life, within the family of the Church, but in order to assert their true dignity and their immortal hope. What is true of every member of the human race is here owned in the case of the baptized, and, from the first beginning of their natural life, they are claimed for spiritual uses and designated as potentially Divine. The Catechism of the Church of England opens with the broad assertion that the Christian child has already a definite spiritual status, and is already committed to definite moral obligations, and is already possessed of a great spiritual hope. In baptism he is taught to say that he "was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," by which it cannot be meant that the Sacrament conferred all these high boons upon him, for by nature he belongs to that human race which is "gathered up" and revealed in its native divineness in the Son of Man, but rather we must understand that these blessed truths (unsuspected or unknown or denied outside the Christian sphere) are explicitly acknowledged in his case. All children, baptized or not, simply by title of their humanity, are members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, but only within the Christian society are these characters recognised and made the postulates of morality. Baptism, then, means a deliberate acceptance of that estimate of the origin, function, and destiny of mankind which is implicit in the fact of the Incarnation of God in Christ. It matters comparatively little whether the administration of the external ceremony be effected in infancy or be postponed to a later stage, so long as the profound and wide-reaching truth symbolised by that ceremony be firmly held: viz. that human nature as such is a consecrated thing, and that, from the cradle to the grave, human life ought to be Christian.

III

Infant Baptism pre-supposes a Social Conception of Christianity.—The society comes first in the order of the individual Christian's religious history. The Church claims him by an older and higher authority than that of his own personal choice, because in truth the Church, into which at his baptism he was admitted, is ideally co-extensive with the whole human race. Just as there is no real possibility of such extreme individualism as would isolate the individual from the common fortunes of mankind, into which he is inexorably bound, apart altogether from his own will, by the very law and covenant of human life, so, in the sphere of religion, it is the case that, as St Paul wrote, "No man liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself." Probably no serious Christian, of whatever denominational description, would dispute this general proposition, but there would certainly be much need of careful explanation before justice would be done in some quarters to the specific form in which the general truth is asserted. It is mere matter of fact, which is also matter of familiar knowledge, that there are in England at the present time two distinct modes of apprehending the universally admitted truth that Christianity is essentially social. The Nonconformists, who, for intelligible reasons which lie on the surface of their history, have an extreme suspicion of ecclesiastical organisations, tend always towards an exaggerated emphasising of the individualistic aspects of Christianity, and they seek to satisfy the claims of the Christian society (always too apparent to be altogether ignored by any whose notions about religion are fashioned by a study of the New Testament) by recognising a mystic or spiritual fellowship of believers on the one hand, and by developing an intense congregational life on the other. Anglicans take another course. Holding hard to the primitive models of ecclesiastical organisation which come down from a distant age, when the external unity of the visible Church was an unquestioned assumption of all Christians, and bearing the character of a national Church, charged to express and consecrate the apparent and operative unity of the nation, the Church of England cannot acquiesce in a low estimate of the claims of the organised society of Christians upon the allegiance and service of the baptized Christian. It is not at bottom an exclusive claim on the part of the episcopally organised Church, as against churches otherwise ordered, that creates the practical difficulty of correlating in a single scheme the interests of both Anglicans and Nonconformists (though that exclusive claim easily exploits the larger argument), but rather a deep divergence of religious standpoint, explicable indeed on historical grounds, but not on that account the less intractable as a factor in politics. Even if the fiction of apostolical succession were cleared out of the controversy, which is—in the phrase of the Prayer Book—much to be wished, there would still remain the more formidable obstacle to agreement, which arises from a radical difference of theory as to the relative importance of the individual and of the society in the scheme of a rightly ordered Christian life. The Anglican not only brings his child to baptism in its infancy, but he thereby places himself under definite obligations with respect to its upbringing, which are publicly certified, and in their fulfilment superintended by the hierarchy. The exhortation addressed at the conclusion of the baptismal service to the god-parents is really an authoritative and careful statement of the Anglican theory of education, and as such we adduce it here.

Forasmuch as this child hath promised by you, his sureties, to renounce the devil and all his works, to believe in God, and to serve Him, ye must remember that it is your parts and duties to see that this infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, he hath here made by you. And that he may know these things the better, ye shall call upon him to hear sermons, and chiefly ye shall provide, that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health, and that this child may be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life, remembering always that baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him; that, as He died, and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized die from sin and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living. Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose.

Let it be always remembered that the vast majority of the English people have been baptized in the parish churches, and that they are by that circumstance placed at the start of their lives under the discipline outlined in the baptismal service. It is not for one moment forgotten that in the case of very many parents there is little or no serious understanding of the pledges they so solemnly give at the font, with respect to the upbringing of the infants, who, on the faith of those pledges, are there admitted into the Christian society, but it is suggested that, when an attempt is made to understand the attitude of the Anglican clergy on the subject of the religious teaching which ought to be provided in the State schools, in which the mass of the baptized children are to receive their education, and which are maintained at the cost of the taxpayers and ratepayers of the nation, some consideration should be given to the facts of the religious situation. If we examine the Church Catechism which is set out in the charge to the god-parents as the appointed manual of Anglican training, we shall find that the same marks of wholeness and social dutifulness are paramount. All life is gathered within its scheme of teaching, and there is no recognition anywhere of any unfortunate and irrational distinction between the religious and the secular. The situation created or, to speak more exactly, drawn into formal recognition at baptism, is the foundation on which the whole scheme of morals is built. Faith, the Faith in God as He has been revealed to men in Christ, the Faith into which the children were baptized, and which they are required as soon as they arrive at years of discretion publicly to re-affirm, forms the religious pre-supposition of moral obligation. There is an inevitable and an inseparable connection between the two-fold duty of man. Duty to God draws in its train, and empowers with the most august sanctions, duty to neighbour. Ambition to rise in society, the most natural, and therefore the most legitimate, temper of those who are living in a free community, is chastened and commissioned by the doctrine of Divine Government, marshalling all the contingencies of human life, and through its circumstances calling men to the service of the Divine Will. It is a curious and melancholy reflection that this truly inspiring conception of individual fortunes has been twisted into the most damaging of calumnies. The Catechism, according to the legendary version of its doctrine, is supposed to teach the duty of social immobility, and to uphold a Christian system of caste worthy of the slaves of some hereditary despotism, but repugnant to the free-born citizens of Britain. The change of a tense from the future to the perfect makes but a trifling alteration in the appearance of a sentence, and very little in its sound, far too little to alarm the sluggish intelligence of the multitude, yet it revolutionises the sense. To teach every English child "to learn and labour truly to get his own living, and to do his duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call him," is an admirable and dignifying thing, always necessary and never more plainly so than in a society such as ours. To alter the last phrase into "unto which it hath pleased God to call me" is to lose the point of the teaching, and to expose the Church to the gravest misconceptions. The statement of the Christian's duty is followed by the admonition to prayer, which, taking the Lord's Prayer as a text, provides a summary of the subjects of Christian petition which (so far as the present writer's knowledge goes) has never provoked any unfavourable criticisms in any quarter, where the reasonableness and obligation of prayer are allowed. The last part of the Catechism is devoted to that instruction about the Sacraments which forms an indispensable element in the preparation of Confirmation candidates, and as such might fittingly be reserved for that purpose. If this were agreed to, and the religious teaching provided in the State schools were limited to the fundamental doctrines, which are certainly held by all varieties of orthodox English Christians, and to the moral obligations, which all agree to deduce from those doctrines, it appears not extravagant to think that (always assuming sanity and goodwill in the responsible politicians on both sides of the controversy) an arrangement might be reached equally consistent with the legitimate demands of democratic theory on the one hand, and with the irreducible requirements of the Anglican conscience on the other. When the principles of Christianity as held by the Church of England are seriously considered, as in equity they ought to be considered by every fair-minded citizen, who desires to discover a settlement of the educational question which shall be lasting, because it is intrinsically just, and leaves no legitimate desire unsatisfied, it will be found that at least four conditions must be satisfied in the education which the conscientious Anglican can approve for his children in the State schools, to which he is compelled to send them.

i. *The System must be in Tone and Tendency Christian.*—There is no question of any denominational colour, which probably very few thoughtful Anglicans desire, and still fewer think consistent with the necessary conditions of national education in a religiously divided nation such as ours. Equally, however, there is no question of that kind of undenominationalism which is known to possess advocates among the more vehement sections of the Nonconformist party: an undenominationalism which affects a lofty indifference to all forms of religious belief, and in the name of neutrality, under colour of doing an equal justice to all sects, whether Christian or non-Christian, inflicts on all the most injurious of insults, an insult which is the more hurtful precisely where religious conviction is strongest, and the standard of morality is highest. It is no doubt true that no connection properly exists between a man's competence to teach most of the subjects which are commonly included in the description of secular education, and his religious beliefs, and so far it is plainly reasonable to exclude reference to religious beliefs from the estimate of professional competence; but it is none the less true that there is all the difference in the world between the tone of a school which is Christian, and the tone of a school which is consciously and professedly non-Christian. The very word "tone" carries the suggestion of moral habitudes of a high and distinctive kind. The morality of the English people is what it is because it has taken shape and direction under the influence of Christ's religion, and to divorce moral training from the sanctions and precepts of the New Testament is for English people to take a leap in the dark of the most perilous kind. In effect, the attempt to exclude Christianity from the educational system really necessitates one of two courses. Either the attempt will succeed by a truly disastrous impoverishment of the whole conception of education as hitherto existing among us, or the attempt will break down by the silent, but rapid and effectual, substitution of the lower morality of materialism for the discarded but, none the less, higher morality of the Gospel. The teaching profession stands at the parting of the ways. The greatest aspect of that great profession is that which is least professional, and (though this will seem a hard saying to the eager agitators who have played so prominent and so mischievous a part in the educational politics of the last few years) the true champions of the ideal of teaching have been the opponents of that extreme undenominationalism which has often paraded as the genuine security of the teacher's liberty and importance. This is not the place to point out the practical working of a non-Christian system in a society constituted as ours, in which for great sections of the people, and those the most degraded and morally necessitous, the State schools serve the purposes of the home and of the Church, as well as that properly assigned to the school. Many Anglicans who, in order to avert what in their eyes would be a very grave misfortune—I mean, the definite acceptance of an attitude of settled alienation from the educational system of the nation—would strive to organise for themselves some provision of religious teaching, which should make amends for the grave defects of the authorised and compulsory education, would not venture as patriots to embrace the risks, which they would accept for themselves as churchmen. It must be postulated in any discussion of the practical question which is serious and sincere, that there is no real alternative to the teaching of the State schools for the masses of the people. This being the case, it becomes all the more important to distinguish between the undenominationalism, which can never be accepted by conscientious Anglicans, because in truth it is inconsistent with any true belief in Christianity as the Revelation of God, and that insistence on the fundamentals of faith and morals, commonly called by the same uncouth term "undenominationalism," in which all orthodox Christians must be assumed to be agreed, as alone suitable for inclusion in the scheme of education which is to match the requirements of a nation, which is religiously harmonious but ecclesiastically divided. If it be further asked how the Christian character of the State schools can be secured apart from the unpopular and discredited method of imposing religious tests on the teachers, it might suffice to answer two things. In the first place, it is to be remembered that the existing teachers are thoroughly representative of the nation in the matter of their religious beliefs. In the ordinary course there is little likelihood of any difficulty arising from the reluctance of the teachers to undertake religious instruction of the simple and fundamental kind indicated above. In the next place, if the system were definitely Christian, the general law, which operates in all employments, would certainly operate in that of teachers. The demand would tend to produce the needed supply. A Christian system would be attractive to religious men and women, who now may not rarely be deterred from entering a profession which seems to regard with suspicion and something like settled aversion all conscientious conviction. For the rest, it will hardly be contended even by the most ardent advocates of secular schools, pure and simple, that the determining factor in the settlement of the educational arrangements of a Christian nation ought to be the scruples, however honourable in themselves, of individuals.

ii. *The System must include Definite Christian Instruction.*—It is essential to the Anglican conception of Christianity that religion should be normal and pervading. To thrust the most important factor in education (for nothing less than this is the position which is assigned to religious teaching by those who are themselves religious) into the background, cutting it out altogether from the public system, and leaving it to the chances of personal concern without the stimulus of examination, or the precaution of competent instruction, is to degrade religion in the eyes of the children, and to compromise their spiritual interests in the most serious degree. It does not appear to the present writer that Anglican principles are in the least inconsistent with such a selection of the precise subjects taught as would remove any fairly objectionable denominational colour in what ought to be generally acceptable, and he is the more confident on the point after examining with care, and setting in comparison the Catechism in the Prayer Book and the very excellent Catechism drawn up a few years since by a representative body of Free Churchmen. The agreement between these Catechisms is remarkably suggestive, and suffices to disprove at once the silly yet persistent contention that there is no logical possibility of agreement between Anglicans and Nonconformists as to the elements of the religion which both sincerely hold and profess. Add the fact (which is really the postulate of any serious attempt to secure effective religious teaching in the State schools) that the instruction will not be given by the representatives of any particular denomination, but by the ordinary staff of the schools, and the most apprehensive of Nonconformists can have no rational ground for suspecting injury to his sectarian interests. I believe that the majority of Anglicans, as well clergy as laity, would be willing to accept the Free Church Catechism almost without alteration as the manual of religious instruction to be used in the State schools, if only, by so great a sacrifice of sentiment, they could secure the general agreement of English Christians in support of what they must needs regard as a religious principle of the utmost importance. So only the character of education as Christian throughout be maintained, and the inseparable connection of Christian faith and Christian morals be secured, there is nothing in the principles of Anglicanism which prohibits the acceptance of any practical arrangements which may be determined upon with a view to conciliating the prejudices of any section of the people.

iii. *The System must not be Anti-ecclesi-*

astical.—Here it is necessary to guard against misconception. It has been already pointed out that the conception of Christianity which the Church of England maintains is essentially social; it implies that Christianity is social in the same sense and range as human life itself, for Christianity is held to be the raising of human life to its true ideal. This conception of Christianity assumes the religiousness of the individual from the very start of the natural life, and, normally, that is, when the circumstances of the individual are rightly ordered under Christian conditions, the religious development proceeds *pari passu* with the natural. Confirmation follows in due course upon baptism, the consecration of youth succeeding to the consecration of infancy. Holy Communion comes as naturally in the wake of Confirmation as manhood with its continuing and recurrent responsibilities follows the brief and unencumbered period of youth. From start to finish of the natural life, the consecrations and graces of

Christianity, secured and imparted in the Christian society, are at hand, moulding and directing all to nobler than merely natural uses. This is the controlling principle which ultimately determines the whole attitude of Anglicans towards the training of the young, and there will be little probability either of justice or of courtesy in educational discussions until non-Anglicans take it into account. There appears to be a different principle at work in the arrangements of Nonconformity. The main emphasis seems to be placed, not on the intrinsic goodness of human nature as demonstrated in the Incarnation of God in Christ, but rather on the actual badness of men as they are. Hence the Nonconformist parent is comparatively indifferent to the religious aspects of infancy and childhood, and rather looks forward to the conversion of his child in due course. All he insists upon in the system of State education, therefore, is that it shall be in such sense neutral that from it shall proceed no hindrances to the process of conversion. It has often been observed, and I am constrained to say that in my opinion the observation is just, that Nonconformity is at its worst when dealing with children, because, embarrassed by its own theory of natural depravity, it has no other methods of treating them than those which have been found to be effectual in the case of adult persons, most of whom may with fair probability be addressed as actual transgressors. Thus children are exhorted to repentance with all the terrifying urgency which revivalist preachers have at their command, and the conversion of these innocents is regularly announced, and made the occasion of much self-gratulation. This method of handling the young appears to be irrational in itself, ignoring, as it must be allowed it does, the plain facts of natural development, and it is also very unfortunate in some of its consequences. The practice of encouraging and employing "boy-preachers" cannot be too strongly reprobated, both in the interest of the boys themselves, who are thus forced into a degree and kind of publicity eminently unfavourable to their healthy development, and in the interest of the religious public, which is induced to yield exaggerated importance to the crude and ignorant vapourings of precocious immaturity. I would not be understood to credit with these absurdities the serious leaders of Nonconformity, who are in some cases known to disapprove of them, but I adduce them in illustration of my present argument because they are legitimate consequences of the principles on which the Nonconformist attitude with respect to religious teaching in the State schools has been determined, and they exhibit in an extreme example the dangers against which Anglicans rightly insist upon being safeguarded. I ought to add that I do not think there is any necessary connection between such teaching as that excellently set forward in the Free Church Catechism already mentioned, and the extravagant proceedings I have just alluded to, but that these are strongly rooted in the traditional practice of Nonconformists, and secure the support of many who would repudiate the theological assumptions on which that practice ultimately rests. Be this as it may, Anglicans may fairly claim that there shall be nothing in the State system of education which would facilitate or commend this anti-ecclesiastical tradition of Nonconformity. The teaching must really be what it pretends to be, that is, undenominational in the sense of fundamental and elementary Christian teaching.

iv. *Finally, the Religious Teaching of the Young must be entrusted to Religious Teachers.*—The very wholeness of the Anglican conception of Christianity prohibits the notion that an unbeliever can be a satisfactory teacher of religion. The religious qualification, as we have indicated above, ought to correspond to the character of the task required. It should not be denominational, for the religious instruction to be given will not be denominational. Accordingly it cannot be secured by any denominational subscription, nor, if it were otherwise, would thoughtful Anglicans care to revert to the well-tried and thoroughly discredited method of subscription. There remains the method of throwing the responsibility frankly, where it must ultimately rest in any case, on the conscience of the individual teacher. If a statutory right to decline giving religious instruction on conscientious grounds were secured to every teacher in the State schools, it would appear that every equitable claim from the side of the teachers had been met. Not even the most sensitive advocate of the rights of the individual conscience can seriously claim that the religious convictions of the majority of English citizens ought to be sacrificed to the fears and scruples of a handful of dissentient teachers. In any case, there can be no doubt as to the requirements of the Anglican conscience. No sane observer of human affairs disputes that there are risks attaching to a frank dependence on the individual sense of honour where material interests are even suspected to be engaged and, therefore, it may freely be admitted that there will always be an element of uncertainty in the best-secured system of religious instruction, but none the less is it the case that human nature in the main rises to the appeals made to it, and that if Anglicans are to insist on securities for good faith, which are to avoid dependence on individual rectitude, they must needs betake themselves to another world than that we are set to live in.

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VII

THE RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF CHILDREN IN THE FREE CHURCHES

In contrast with the method which Catholicism, Roman or Anglican, adopts in the religious training of children, the Free Churches have an ideal and a method of their own, which it is not altogether easy for an outsider to comprehend. The Catholic notion is to surround the child from the earliest period of consciousness with sacramental influences, to accustom the mind to religious impressions before they can be understood, to teach religious formularies and articles of Creed by rote, and to enforce by authority practices which are *not even the subject of discussion.* Travelling in the train some time ago, I found myself in company with two little children who had been deposited there by some Anglican Sisters of Mercy. The children, frightened by the tunnels and the loneliness, came to me and climbed upon my knee; they talked in their artless way of all their belongings and surroundings, and presently the little maid—she was scarcely more than ten—showed me with satisfaction a book which had been given to her by the Sisters; it was a guide for little Catholics at the celebration of the mass, and the object was to impress upon the tender and unreasoning minds of children the dogma that at the words of the priest the bread became the veritable body of Jesus Christ. The little girl had no notion, of course, of what was implied, but her glee in showing the book to everyone in the carriage was a sufficient indication of the method adopted. That is to say the method is formal or formative, working from the outside, securing a conformity of action, a verbal assent of belief, and a general religious attitude which, being the result, not of reason but of habit, is likely to survive as a habit in defiance of reason.

Now the Free Church conception, quite apart from the specific teaching thus inculcated, would not sanction the method. Our view would be that the results of such a method are not, strictly speaking, religious at all. The child is committed to a *parti pris* before it can really understand, and the ultimate choice in the decision of truth is prejudiced for it from the beginning. I know, for example, schools which are entirely under the influence and indeed are the property of Free Churchmen, where the exclusion of sectarian teaching is a fundamental principle. So far from wishing to indoctrinate the children with the special views of Free Churchmen, the managers of these schools would resent the intrusion of any sectarian element, though it should be their own. It is very difficult for those who occupy the Catholic standpoint to realise this fundamental conception of Free Churchmen, and the conception possibly needs some explanation and even some defence. I propose, therefore, to state in the first place why the recognised Catholic method seems to us unsatisfactory, and to sketch in the second place the methods of religious training and instruction which we adopt or wish to adopt in preference.

1. *The Reasons for shrinking from Dogmatic Teaching of the Young.*

Psychologically the human mind passes through stage after stage of development, and it is an axiom that the teaching suitable to a later stage may not only be unsuitable, but even prejudicial, to the mind at an earlier stage. To attempt to give the minds of little children the dogmas which are suitable to a fully developed intelligence may crush and stultify the budding powers. Doubtless it is easy to make children learn by rote, but to learn by rote what is not, and cannot be, understood, is not educational at all. To understand a very little and to remember it, and from that little to pass on to more, is the only way in which the mind can be healthily developed. This point need hardly be argued, since it is now very generally admitted, and no wise teacher in any secular department of education attempts to train a child by stocking the memory with meaningless formulæ. But a child's mind cannot normally respond to the subtle distinctions and the rational dogmas which are the outcome of prolonged and laborious thought. If I may use the illustration which is already to hand, no child can wholesomely be taught the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Such a doctrine is the outcome of a scholastic philosophy which no child can understand. The idea that the bread on the altar, remaining to all appearance bread, is yet inwardly transformed into another substance and has become a proper object of worship, is so subtle, and even to the acutest intelligence so questionable, that to present it to a child's mind is not to train but to deaden the mind. In fairy tales the impossible may be contemplated with pleasure, and unexpected transformations may take place without injury, because the convention of the fairy tale is fully grasped by the child. He knows that it is make-believe. But a transformation so mysterious, so contradicted by the senses, so questionable to many of the sanest and most reverent minds, as that which is implied in Transubstantiation, can only be commended to a child as a tale out of wonderland; for practical religious purposes it can have no wholesome effect.

The religious ideas which can successfully be imparted to infants and young children are broad and simple. Dr du Buy, in an intensely interesting study of comparative religion, has maintained that the five great religions of the world, Mohammedanism, Confucianism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Vedantism, represent a scale of religious truth applicable to the advancing stages of human life. Mohammedanism, with its one doctrine of the unity of God, is the religion of the child; Confucianism, with its practical and worldly ethics, is the religion of the boy; Christianity, with its supreme doctrine of love to God and man, is the religion of adolescence; Buddhism, with its doctrine of merit, is the religion of later life; and Vedantism, with its dreamy metaphysics, is the religion of old age. The ingenious discussion need not detain us here, but it serves to remind us how specific the religious teaching for a child must be, and how essentially different it is from the religion suitable to maturer years. Of course it may be said that the great dogmas of the Christian faith are so broad and simple that a little child can understand them, and there is a great element of truth in the contention, but it is only the broad truths and not the detailed doctrines that can be grasped by the childish mind. The great attributes of God naturally occupy the thoughts of little children, and some of the acutest things ever said about the mysteries of the Divine Being have come quite literally from the mouths of babes and sucklings; the life and character of Jesus are quite intelligible to even a very little child, and the attraction of the Gospel narrative, so long as it is not marred by doctrinal subtleties, is often irresistible. The idea, too, of the Spirit living and working within us is so much a matter of experience that the child, even at the beginning, finds the subject not strange. But while these broad truths are intelligible and capable of making a healthy impression upon even infant minds, a doctrine of the Trinity will only introduce confusion, and may lead to the secret germination of unbelief. For the doctrine of the Trinity is a daring speculation of thinkers, and is only justified in a philosophic atmosphere to which children are necessarily strangers. Or, again, it is very useless, if not hurtful, to cloud the child's apprehension of Jesus by the attempt to explain His twofold nature. While the Jesus of the Gospels is attractive to minds that love the concrete, the Jesus of the Creeds is attractive only to minds that can live easily in abstractions. It is not necessary to go further into detail. It is enough to say that the undogmatic method of the Scriptures seems to us far more suitable for the training of the children than the dogmatic methods of Creeds and Churches. Indeed, the Bible is in a very curious sense a children's book. The method of teaching rather by tales and parables than by precepts is the ideal method for training children. The book feeds the imagination, and cultivates the moral sympathies. It evokes faith, in the first instance, towards God the Creator, and leads the mind judiciously to God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son. It avoids definitions and arguments, relying upon the Spirit which is at work in every human being. And therefore, while imparting Bible knowledge, any teacher of good intention can hardly fail to convey religious truth and spiritual influence.

The truth embodied in a tale
Will enter in at lowly doors.

Is it not open to question whether the widespread unbelief among the adults of Christendom is not due to the almost universal practice of indoctrinating the children with religious dogmas or even truths which they have not understood? Why does religion seem dull to so many grown-up people, while to little children it possesses a fascinating interest? Surely it is because those early years have been wearied with the inculcation of statements which could not be understood, and religion has come to mean for the man that tiresome and perplexing presentation of things which were remote from life and incomprehensible, presented to the child as religious instruction.

The Free Church view, therefore, is an objection not so much to certain dogmas which Catholicism enforces as to the whole system of enforcing dogmas at all. Apart altogether from the forms and ceremonies which are imposed on the childish body, and without questioning their value as years go on, we cannot but feel that the forms must follow on the feelings, the ceremonies must be the expression of the heart; and to reverse the order is to mis-educate the child.

But enough has been said upon the negative side. It is more important to sketch the methods by which the Free Churches would seek to make the children religious; for it is hardly necessary to say that Free Churchmen are no less eager than Catholics to make the children religious and positively Christian. Their antagonism to the Catholic method arises only from their conviction that such a method does not produce the desired results.

2. *The Ideal and Methods of Religious Training.*

There are two points which may be regarded in some sense as distinctive of the Free Church view of religious education. The first of these is the conviction that every child must be born again of the Spirit; the second is the importance attached to the teaching of parents and the influence of the home, in contrast with the importance elsewhere attached to the teaching and the atmosphere of the Church. These two points require some elaboration, but when they are understood they explain the practical attitude of Free Churchmen towards educational problems.

First, then, we may look at the theory that conversion is the necessary beginning of a Christian life, for in the light of that conviction the object of all religious training is to lead the soul to that decisive crisis; and apart from that decisive crisis all religious teaching will be ineffective. The Catholic teaching insists on the idea that conversion is produced in baptism; "Christian" is identical with "christened." A child duly christened and subsequently confirmed is treated as a Christian who merely requires instruction in the ways and practices of the organised Church. But according to the Free Church view, to be christened and to be Christian are distinct things. To be christened is to receive the pledge and promise of a Christian training, and especially and primarily such training as will lead to a true conversion and spiritual birth; but it cannot be assumed, as certainly it cannot be proved, that the spiritual birth is involved necessarily in the christening. Conversion is a process which implies consciousness; it is not accomplished in our dreams, nor can it be accomplished for us. It is the change which takes place when the mind responds to Truth, and the soul responds to God. To treat anyone as converted when he is not is to induce a blindness and lethargy of the spirit which are the most serious obstacles to conversion. The first element, therefore, of religious education, is to recognise that the soul has to be awakened and the personal response to the Christian verities has to be secured. In a word the new birth is treated, not as a form or a convention, but as a fact of the spiritual life. Unless and until it is a fact in any given soul, little is accomplished towards the production of a Christian life.

It is not at the present time necessary to enter into an elaborate defence of the fact and the nature of conversion. Professor James's Gifford lectures on the varieties of religious experience may be said to have established the place of conversion in the religious life, not only for religious people, but for all serious thinkers. It can no longer be regarded as unphilosophical or unscientific to expect a revolution of the inward life, and it cannot be treated as extravagant to assume that a true Christianity is always and everywhere the result of such a revolution. There are of course souls which seem to us, as Tertullian phrased it, naturally Christian, and in their case the change which is demanded may seem to be too slight to justify the term conversion; but it must be remembered that these are precisely the souls that, in review of their religious experience, are most amazed at the conversion of which they have been the subjects. A Bunyan can never sufficiently admire the abounding grace which transformed him, "the chief of sinners," just because, as everything shows, he was from the first a sensitive and conscientious soul, one who might have deserved Tertullian's designation. The conversion of which we are speaking is not merely moral, but spiritual. The confusion between the two, so frequently made, is the chief cause why conversion is so imperfectly understood. It is fair to suppose that Nicodemus was morally sound, and even virtuous in an unusual degree, but it is to him, and not to the scandalous or hypocritical members of his own order, that Christ's truth was uttered. "Ye must be born again." To be born of the Spirit is to begin the spiritual life, and while it is possible to inculcate ethical principles and train children in virtuous habits, religious instruction in the specific sense of the word can only be given by the spiritual to the spiritual, and can therefore only begin with the child who is as a matter of fact and in spiritual reality "born again."

But with this truth is bound up another which cannot be too clearly explained, *i.e.*, that conversion, or, if we may use the term, regeneration, may come with the earliest dawn of conscious decision, and may be developed with the growing life of the child. No one has succeeded in stating the inferior age-limit of that mysterious change. Frequently little children of three or four years of age are observed to pass through the very experiences adapted to their tender years which are recorded in the case of the Apostle Paul. A little child becomes vividly conscious of Christ calling him by name, is stricken with the sense of guilt which his childish peccadilloes would hardly seem to justify, and turns to the Cross and its redemptive sacrifice with a simplicity of faith which proves how natural God's way of salvation is. Where these early motions of the religious life are found in children, it becomes the whole object of religious education to keep them healthy, to foster them, and to train them to a completeness and fulfilment.

But, it may be said, what is to be done with children in whom these signs of grace do not appear? What is the religious instruction suitable to them? The answer perhaps may be suggested, that moral teaching should be constantly and carefully given; the practice of goodness should be suggested by correction and by example. The ethical life should be cultivated in the best light of our psychological knowledge. But the religious teaching should be precisely that, and only that, which is calculated to lead the child, of whatever age he may be, to that personal choice, that spiritual decision, which constitutes the new birth. If it were established that the hard dogmas of the Creeds and the Councils induced that spiritual change, it would be desirable to instruct children in them. But experience points in an opposite direction. The meat for strong men, so far from nourishing the babe, is injurious to it. The elaborated formularies of the Church are a bar to the spiritual change that is desired.

On the other hand, explain it as we may, th Bible, taken as a whole and studied and taugh in the most natural way, is indued with th singular power of leading souls, even ver young souls, to conversion. It is true that heartless and unbelieving teacher may rende even the Bible futile, but any honest min endeavouring to grasp the religious idea which underlie and are developed in the sacred Scriptures, and presenting these ideas i a form that the child can understand, and i which he is interested, is knowingly or unknowingly doing the most that can be done by human agency to bring the child to the grea decision. It may be said that such a contention assumes a supernatural element in the Bible, and gives to it an importance which cannot be assigned to any other literature. But that assumption is exactly what experience seems to justify. It is only when the instances are carefully collected and sifted that one realises the astounding place which Scripture takes in the conversion of souls. The

Biblical idea seems to be behind every word of man that produces such an effect, and in an immense majority of instances it is a Biblical word, a definite text, which flashes conviction in upon the soul. These accumulated evidences cannot be shaken by the altered methods of handling Scripture which are demanded by modern research. The conclusions of criticism may be conveyed even to young minds without injury, and it is an advantage to forestall possible shocks by familiarising the child from early days with what may be called the modern view of the Bible. But the Bible in the modern, no less than in the older acceptation of it, is an armoury of spiritual weapons, or rather, it is a fountain of spiritual waters. And when every correction of history or science or thought is amply allowed for, the plain and unmistakable truths of Scripture work their old effects on human souls. The teacher's task, if he intends to do his work religiously, is to let this supernatural power play on the hearts of his scholars, to open the fountai that the living waters may flow to the thirsty souls, to open the armoury that the weapon of the warfare may be eagerly sought and gir on. Where the teacher fails will generally b in not realising the object that really is i view, and in forgetting that Scripture is taught not in order to secure a place in the examination lists, but in order to effect the conversio of the children's souls. To treat the Scriptur lessons merely like other lessons in the curriculum is legitimate enough, and, as Professo Huxley so eloquently urged, the Bible ough to be taught to every English child as th great classic of our literature, and the mint o our noblest speech; but such teaching of th Bible is not necessarily the teaching of religion and to speak of it as religious instruction is a inappropriate as to speak of the inculcation o dogmas and Church principles under the sam name.

But this reflection, with all it implies, naturally turns our attention from the schoo o the home, from the Church teacher to the parent, from the merely formal religious instruction, the nature of which can never be adequately guaranteed, to the real religious instruction which can and must be given by those who train the children from the cradle, and form the atmosphere in which they draw their vital breath. In the Old Testament the method of religious instruction is that the fathers should make known to the children the things that they have learnt from their fathers. Such instruction was to be given continually, not in set form, but during the ordinary occupations of the day — morning, noon, and night (Deuteronomy iv. 9, 10; vi. 6–8; xi. 19). No provision was made for the public instruction of the children, because it was recognised that a spiritual law can only be imparted by those who have the care of children from their infancy. It must be taught by the atmosphere of the home, and by the particular directions of life, as occasions arise. Theology may be taught in the schools, the history and dogmas of religion may be taught by efficient teachers, but religion itself—the spirit of it and the application of it—can be taught only by parents or by those who, in the training of the young, stand *in loco parentis.* This principle of the Old Testament was never abrogated in the New, and never can be abrogated, for it is simple, natural, and eternal. No greater disservice was ever done to religion than that officious undertaking of the Church to relieve the parents of their primary duties. The Church had no power to impart a true religion to infants and little children. By claiming that she had such a power, first at the font and then in the schools, she weakened the responsibility of those to whom that power necessarily appertains. Her function may be to inculcate on parents the parental duty of teaching their children, and even to instruct parents in the best methods of performing their task. She should be instant in season and out of season in reminding every father that he is by the very nature of the case compelled to teach his child from day to day the laws of the spiritual life, the claims of the Christian Gospel, the way by which the claims are to be recognised and the laws are to be obeyed. If the Church succeeds in rousing the father to a sense of his duty, she has succeeded with the child. But if she has relieved the father of his duty, she has injured not only the child but the father also. Amid the idle clamour that has filled the air in recent times about the religious education of the children, this primary truth has seldom or never been heard. The parents are ruled out of court, the Church acts as if her function were to relieve them of their duties, and assumes that if she does not teach the children religion, religion will not be taught. Of what value, we may ask, was the religious teaching given by the Church to the fathers when they were children, if they, when they become fathers, are incapable of teaching their children? The only method—so the genuine Free Churchman argues—by which the educational problem can be solved and the rising generation can be religiously trained, is that of remitting to the schools the function of general and secular instruction which they are capable of discharging, and of resuscitating in the conscience of parents and guardians the responsibility for the religious training of their children which they alone are able to give.

At present the father weakly thrusts the responsibility upon the mother, and is generally unconscious of the treachery and cowardice involved in the action. The mother's duty is to manifest religion to her child, but it is not her specific duty to teach it. "The fathers to the children shall make known." It is small wonder that boys grow up with the notion that religion is the concern of women and children and priests, when they have learnt the little they know from such quarters, and have observed the silence or possibly the scorn of their fathers in regard to the highest of subjects. A man who brings a child into the world and has nothing to teach him concerning the meaning of life and the destiny of the soul is no better than one of the lower animals. "Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains," he treats his offspring as the mere creatures of the dead earth to which he himself belongs. The father is as much bound to train the child-soul as he is to feed and clothe its body, and when once the Church begins to insist upon this truth, and when the State declines to give that religious instruction which only parents can give, every man will wake up to the reality of the situation, and will find that if he does not teach his children religion they will go without it, and that to leave his children without it is to inflict on them the cruellest wrong that man can perpetrate.

But it may be argued by those whose minds are imbued with the ecclesiastical prejudices of a thousand years that religion is so complicated and difficult a subject that the ordinary parent cannot be expected to impart it, and that a class of specialists, *i.e.*, the clergy and clerically trained teachers, must be employed to supply the defect. Here we put our hand on the root of the whole mischief. Theology may be complicated, but religion is not. The creeds of the Church, the creation of specialists, may require specialists to explain them, but the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the breathing of the Spirit of the Heavenly Father on His children, requires only the Spirit to teach it. The sooner we realise the simplicity that is in Christ, the better for our country and for the Church. The ethics of the Gospel is simplicity itself, for it is all summed up in one precept, "Thou shalt love," and it is all enforced by one sanction—the love of God to us. God loves you and you must love God and love men, is the whole ethical system of Christianity. It is taught to children by loving them and by loving God, by showing to the children what God is, by the human love manifested, and encouraging them to love God by the human love elicited. And as the ethics of the Gospel is simple, so is the truth on which it depends. Indeed, it requires great ingenuity to spin the complicated theology and the confused doctrines out of the absolute simplicity of the Gospel truths. To say that a man cannot teach to his child the truths of the Gospel is to say that he is not a Christian and to imply that he is something less than a man. That the Invisible God is love; that Jesus Christ, who lived a human life, a life recorded in the Gospels, is the human manifestation of the Divine Love; that the Spirit, the very Spirit of God, breathes in all our hearts, prompts us to good, warns us of evil, teaches us the goodness and the saving power of Christ, brings us in prayer into contact with God; that because God is such, and His revelation is such, we are called to love and obey and to live in the spirit of this creed; that the Church is the assembly and congregation of those who thus believe and by believing are born again: this after all is the *summa theologiæ*, the whole truth of religion that has been imparted to mankind, and this every father who believes it can impart to his little child; he can make the child feel its truth by practising it; and the child will be conscious of the translucent atmosphere which such a truth throws around the home and the life. These, then, in brief, are the principles which Free Churchmen are striving, often inarticulately enough, to realise in our national life and in our system of education. Recognising the sincerity and nobility of the Catholic ideal, they yet are convinced that it is not defensible from Scripture, nor justified by experience; they turn back to Scripture, back, if we may say so, to Christ, in order to assay a method of religious instruction which in a broad sense has hardly received a fair trial hitherto, but which, so far as it has been tried, has been shown, like the Gospel of which it is a part, to be "the power of God unto salvation."

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VIII

BAPTISTS AND THE CHILDREN

The design of this essay is to set forth the ideas generally prevalent among Baptists concerning the relation of children to Christianity and the Christian Church.

As Baptists have no authorised Creed or Confession of Faith to the maintenance of which they are pledged, it must be understood that the writer alone is responsible for the opinions herein expressed. At the same time he has no doubt that what is written may be accepted as representing, with a fair degree of accuracy, the common beliefs of the community to which he belongs.

That such an exposition should find a place in a series of papers dealing with "The Child and Religion" is perhaps only fitting, since, on the ground of their rejection of Infant Baptism, a *prima facie* reason may be alleged for supposing that Baptists differ in some respects from other Christians as to the proper religious instruction of children, and as to their relation to the Church. Probably the actual difference is not so great as might be imagined; at least so far as the Evangelical Free Churches are concerned. Those churches are marked by a wonderful agreement in regard to the fundamental truths of the Christian Gospel and the beginning of the religious life in the human soul. Their differences of conviction about external rites leave this great region practically untouched, and it may be gravely doubted whether any of the Free Churches that maintain the baptism of infants would claim on this ground an advantage over the Baptists in the religious training of the young.

With the churches that not only practise Infant Baptism but assert the dogma of

Baptismal Regeneration,—the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, for example,—the case is different. To them the Baptist position must appear dreadful indeed. They must deem the children of Baptist parents deprived of an invaluable spiritual gift, and far less likely to grow up Christians than are the children who have been brought to the font in their infancy, who have been "regenerate and born anew of water and of the Holy Spirit," and thus "grafted into the body of Christ's Church." Did the doctrine of baptismal regeneration indicate the normal way in which the Christian life begins, nothing could well be sadder than the condition of the children of Baptists. Their disabilities would be unspeakable and their spiritual state that of the heathen.

This is not the place to enter at length into the controversy about the efficacy of the Sacraments which still divides Christendom into two great parties. It is enough to say that, rejecting Infant Baptism as unscriptural and injurious, Baptists disavow and repudiate the dogma of Baptismal Regeneration. They do not believe that a miracle of grace is wrought in the soul of an unconscious babe by the pouring of water upon his face. To speak quite frankly, they believe that the doctrine, as stated, for example, in the Prayer Book of the Established Church, is as repugnant to reason as it is destitute of the sanction of the New Testament; and that it tends to degrade the pure religion of Christ to the level of magic and superstition. What is much to the point in the present discussion is that the theory breaks down utterly when the appeal is made to facts. If baptized children have received the grace of spiritual regeneration and unbaptized children lack that grace, there should be a clear manifestation of the difference in the life and conduct of the boys and girls. There should be as marked a contrast between the character and behaviour of the baptized and unbaptized as there is between day and night. But no such difference has ever been traced. The baptismal regeneration theory *does not work*, and is condemned by its failure. Baptized children evince no clearer signs of grace than do those to whom belong only the "uncovenanted mercies of God."

By many, perhaps the majority, of those who observe the rite, Infant Baptism is regarded, not as an instrument of regeneration but as a sign of dedication to God; and its value is believed to lie, not in any effect wrought at the time, but in the appeal afterwards based upon the act, when the definite religious instruction of the child is begun. The question therefore arises, Is there not a gain here which the Baptist misses? Is not the child that has been dedicated to God in baptism more likely to respond to religious training when told of what his parents did for him in his infancy?

The answer is that, according to the doctrine of the New Testament, baptism has a particular use and significance, and from this it should not be perverted. It is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual" experience. It is the symbol of "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." Its pre-requisites, therefore, are Repentance toward God and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

This spiritual significance of baptism is so gravely important that it ought not to be set aside or obscured. But it *is* set aside and obscured when the rite is administered to infants in whom there is no corresponding spiritual reality; and any supposed good secured by using baptism with a meaning different from what it has in the New Testament is more than counterbalanced by the loss involved in such obscuration. Baptism is the divinely appointed sign of spiritual regeneration; and to use the sign in the absence of the thing signified is the way to invest the symbol with an utterly fictitious and misleading value.

To the dedication of an infant to God by a service of prayer there may be no serious objection. Godly parents naturally seek the blessing of the Almighty upon their children and upon all that is done to promote their highest welfare. Yet it must be remembered that any formal rite of infant dedication is attended by a subtle danger against which there is need to watch—it is the danger of supposing that the actual relation of the child to God is in some way affected by the ceremony. The idea that the spiritual life of the child is secured, or directly aided, by such a service is scarcely less objectionable than the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

Is it then the Baptist belief that children must be allowed to grow up to years of adolescence, their "natural depravity" meanwhile having free course, and that only when the age of personal responsibility has been reached, efforts should be made to secure their "conversion" to a genuinely religious life?

Probably it is their well-known adherence to "Believers' Baptism" that has led to Baptists being credited with this theory. It is supposed by many that they have no sympathy with the idea that the religious life of children should be developed naturally and gradually from their earliest years, but that they hold a "spiritual crisis" to be essential to salvation, and that this "crisis" can occur only at an age suitable for a public confession of Christ in baptism. Opinions of this sort are attributed to Baptists by Horace Bushnell in his suggestive treatise on "*Christian Nurture.*" He writes:—

"It must be presumed either that the child will grow up a believer or that he will not. The Baptist presumes that he will not, and therefore declares the rite [of Infant Baptism] to be inappropriate. God presumes that he will, and therefore appoints it. The Baptist tells the child that nothing but sin can be expected of him; God tells him that for his parents' sake, whose faith he is to follow, He has written His own name upon him, and expects him to grow up in all duty and piety" (*Christian Nurture*, p. 40).

It would perhaps be ungenerous to make too much of a sentence which may have been written in the heat of controversy; but it is amazing that such words as these should have been allowed to stand in the printed page. They are as untrue to fact as they are unworthy of the wise and fertile teacher whose name is deservedly honoured in England as in America.

There is nothing in Baptist beliefs that may not be harmonised with the theory of Bushnell that children should be "nurtured in the admonition of the Lord" from their earliest years, and be trained with the hope and expectation that they will "grow up Christians from childhood, never knowing themselves as being otherwise." The nurture and training of young children may be a means of grace and salvation as surely as the preaching that is addressed to adults. Our inquiry is as to the way in which such training can be most efficiently carried forward.

We start with the profound conviction that *the little ones all belong to God.* They are

His children. They are dear to Christ. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." When they die before reaching years of responsibility they are received into the Father's house to develop their life in conditions supplied by infinite love. That "there are infants a span long in hell," as was affirmed by preachers in past times; that "many non-elect infants are damned," according to Calvin's *decretum horribile;* that unbaptized children are excluded from God's mercy, as by the rubric of the Prayer Book they are shut out from Christian burial—these are not Baptist beliefs. One would like to think they had become incredible, in these days, to all sane intelligence.

Yet children need Christian training, for this reason among others, that *they have a nature prone to sin.* The psychology of child-life is receiving far greater attention now than formerly, but the more thoroughly the child is understood, the more clearly the fact emerges that he is a creature of different and contrary tendencies. As Plato says, "The horses of the soul's chariot pull different ways." The seeds of evil are in the nature of the youngest. He is not an angel, but a human being with a bias to wrongdoing. This bias of human nature is "something with which we are born, and which may therefore be called a malign inheritance. The real origin of this sinful tendency, like all other origins, is wrapped in obscurity, as is also the precise mode of its transmission. . . . All we know about the matter is the fact of our experience; and all that we can lawfully infer is that a tendency, which runs throughout all history, must also have obtained in the prehistoric past, and therefore be universal" (Illingworth, *Christian Character*, p. 13). This tendency is what theologians call "original sin," what Browning calls "the corruption of man's heart." To shut our eyes to it when we consider the problem of Christian training is to ignore one of the most important factors of the situation. It is this that makes the nurture of children so serious a business.

But this sinful tendency is not the only heritage of our children: *they have a disposition to goodness* as well as to badness; a beneficent as well as a malign inheritance. They come to us from God, who is their "Home" and their Father, "trailing clouds of glory," and possessed of capacities for all moral excellence. They are not wholly bad, mere bundles of depravity and heirs of wrath,—they have a nature that is akin to God, dormant powers that may be trained and developed to the practice of noblest Christian virtues. They are born into a redeemed world, are surrounded and played upon by benign spiritual influences, and are illuminated (who shall say how soon?) by "the true Light, which, coming into the world, lighteth every man." They are "God's nurslings," entrusted to human hearts and hands that they may be nurtured for Him; and here is the whole problem of child training—How may the child be so nurtured in the chastening and admonition of the Lord that he may learn to cherish and develop what is good in his nature, to restrain and subdue what is evil, to direct his will and choice in the right way, and thus grow up from his early years a true servant of God and a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Already it will be seen that to the question: *When should the religious training of the child begin?* no very definite answer can be given. There is no trustworthy guide to a knowledge of the time at which a child receives his first religious impressions and ideas. They are given and received unconsciously. They come imperceptibly as the dawn, fall quietly as the dew, and are no more to be fixed to a certain date than is the beginning of a child's self-consciousness, or his sense of the love of his parents, or of the answering love and trust in his own heart.

Of more practical importance by far is the inquiry: *What should the nature of the training be?* And the truth to be remembered is that the religion of a child should be suited to a child's nature and capacities; its contents of the simplest and most elementary kind. Sometimes parents and teachers fall into the error of making their own religious experiences and beliefs a standard for the little ones, and encourage on the part of children emotions and language appropriate only to those of riper years. This is to do unwholesome violence to the child-nature. What should be encouraged is a child's religion, not a child's imitation of a man's religion. Almost invariably it is through the child's relation to his parents that his earliest lessons in religion are learnt. The earthly is the shadow and symbol of the heavenly. The love and care of father and mother are the natural means of suggesting the love and care of God; and the trust and obedience growing out of the lower relationship are the guide to what is needed in the higher. As Dr Martineau has said, in words of impressive beauty: "The lessons of devotion are, for a long time, adopted passively, with listening faith; the great ideas dwindling, as they fall from the teacher's lips, to the dimensions of the infant mind receiving them. When the mother calls her children to her knees to speak to them of God, she is *herself* the greatest object in their affections. It is by her power over them that God becomes Venerable; by the purity of her eye that He becomes Holy; by the silence of the hour that He becomes Awful; by the tenderness of her tones that He becomes Dear. That the parents bend, with lowly look and serene result, before some invisible Presence, is the first and sufficient hint to the heart's latent faith; which therefore blends awhile with the domestic sympathies, simply mingling with them an element of mystery, and imparting to them a deeper and less earthly colouring" (*Endeavours after the Christian Life*, vol. i. pp. 5, 6). The earliest thoughts of the child concerning God and Christ are doubtless crude,—all his early thoughts are crude,—but from the crudest beginnings true religious ideas and a true religious life may be developed; and thus, through wisely directed parental influence, the child may grow up in that choice of good and rejection of evil, in that relation of reverence, trust, love, and submission towards God, which are the essential elements of vital religion.

Of the Christian truths in which children should be instructed, or of the dogmatic forms which those truths assume among Baptists, it is not necessary to supply a detailed statement. Speaking generally, Baptists are heartily at one in these matters with all other Evangelical Churches, and the Catechism issued by the Council of the Free Churches may be regarded as an accurate summary of the things commonly believed by them. Yet it is not so much by means of catechisms as by lessons drawn directly from the New Testament that it is sought to impart Christian ideas to children; and, above all else, emphasis is attached to the life and words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; from the conviction that to gain a clear conception of His character and an accurate knowledge of His will is to have the best possible guide to the Christian life.

The religious training of a child calls for patience. No mistake could be greater than that of looking for ripe results at too early an age. Precocity in children is seldom admirable; precocity in religion is unnatural and deplorable. There is a peril that those who in their childhood pass through what may be called adult experiences will suffer for it in their subsequent life. They run through the whole gamut of emotion too soon. The forcing process robs them of strength and vitality and their capacities are exhausted. They have little power of growth and are apt to prove sterile when fruit is expected. In the whole subject of child training no lesson is more important than this: the religion of children should be simple and suited to their years, and the aim should be to foster a slow and gradual development.

As childhood is left behind and adolescence begins, some change may well be made in the method; for now the critical period has come, when the work of preceding years should find its consummation. Recent writers on the psychology of religion seem to have shown conclusively that this is the time when a personal religious decision is most commonly reached.[1] There is now awakened in the young a keener self-consciousness; a sense, too, of personal duty and responsibility; there is a turning of the thoughts outward, an instinct of altruism, of subordination, of sacrifice: all of which combine to furnish a preparation when the appeal is made for personal, intelligent self-consecration to the service of Christ. All the churches, episcopal and non-episcopal, provide for some such appeal during the years of adolescence—the episcopal churches by the rite of confirmation, the non-episcopal by admission to church membership and first communion, the Baptists by the ordinance of baptism. And whatever the earlier training may have been, it is most important that this appeal for personal decision should be urged and responded to. No care and attention can be too great to be bestowed on the young at this critical period of life, when nature tells of a break in the development of body and mind, and when the soul is more susceptible and responsive than at any other stage.

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[1] See, *e.g.*, Starbuck's *Psychology of Religion*.

To some it may seem that, in what has hitherto been said, insufficient regard has been had to the work of God Himself in Christian nurture; but, in fact, that work has been a presupposition throughout. The Fatherhood of God, the infinite love which is in the heart of God for every child of man, is the surest guarantee of His nurturing ministries. *He* is the real Educator of the children; they are nearer and dearer to Him than to any human parent. Our part is to be His "fellow-workers," and what has been attempted in this essay is to trace the method of training which is most in accordance with the divine plan as revealed in the New Testament and in human life. It should be added that if theological terms, such as "conversion" and "regeneration," have been avoided, yet it is the *process* of conversion and regeneration that has been described. We have learnt to interpret these great words rather differently from the way in which they were interpreted by our fathers, and to look for signs of the process in other forms and over a wider area; but we attach no less importance to the process itself. One of the most noteworthy and undeniable facts of modern religious life is that vast numbers of those who are received into our churches have no story to tell of a great and sudden crisis through which they have passed; but none the less they have seen the evil of sin and the beauty of holiness, and have turned from the one to reach out towards the other; they have learnt the weakness and need of human nature, and have begun a life of trust, obedience, and self-surrender to our Lord Jesus Christ. And here are the essential and abiding elements of religion for all.

The question scarcely needs asking: *On whom does this solemn work of child-nurture devolve?* The agents in doing God's will are first of all the parents. Their responsibility can never be evaded. No Christian parent would think of handing over the duty to others, even if a transfer of the responsibility were possible. But, supplementary to the work of the parents, the Church has its own function which it seeks to discharge through its Sunday Schools and its Ministry; the one guiding principle being that the spiritual work must be assigned to an agency possessed of spiritual qualifications. To Baptists it is incredible that the teaching of religion can rightly be a function of the State. Their contention is that the secular authority should do its own work in giving secular instruction, and should leave the religious instruction to the religious agency. The frank acceptance of this principle would soon bring our education controversy to an end.

In the light of this exposition it will be seen how easily and naturally the place of baptism in the religious life is determined. Baptism, on its human side, is the expression of a personal decision; on its divine side it is the symbol of spiritual regeneration; and so it is rightly administered when the decision has been made and the regeneration effected. "Adult" baptism, it should be said, is no part of Baptist belief or practice. Fitness for baptism and church-membership is not decided by age. Young men and maidens and even children are welcomed to the baptistery and to the Church, when they give evidence of their allegiance to Christ. And it should, in all fairness, be noted that any supposed difficulty in discriminating among candidates for baptism is shared by all other churches equally with Baptists; since the same question of fitness must arise in regard to confirmation, or such other ceremony as may be put in the place which baptism rightly holds. To read the human heart and pronounce infallible judgment on human character is impossible; to accept the confession of faith and discipleship, and to welcome the young Christian to the membership of Christ's Church, is a privilege and duty that may gladly be undertaken.

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IX

NEW CHURCH TRAINING

The training of children in the New Church is viewed as necessarily religious. The Lord is the only Giver of their life; and He is the Father of all. Every child is His child.

By the Lord in this statement is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Jehovah incarnate in His own glorified and Divine Humanity. His grand end in the creation of the universe itself is the formation of angelic heavens from the human race; and all intermediate causes are only means to accomplish that effect.

When God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," He gave an order for the spiritual education of mankind. That order engaged the activities of angels in the spiritual world, and equally applied to parents and teachers of children in all ages of this world. Strictly speaking, it is never we who educate our children and bring them to the image and likeness of the Lord. It is He who graciously uses us as His agents, so far as we can be made serviceable.

In the very essence and spirit of the Sacred Scripture are the great underlying principles of a religious training. Genesis i. introduces us to the Divine method and purpose. The Law and the Prophets, taken as a whole, supply instruction in different degrees of the Divine truth, and also treat of the various states of human minds to which that instruction is to be conveyed. The Gospels and the Revelation carry both the child and the sage into the actual Presence of the supreme Teacher Himself. From this standpoint, which is Christian and Divine, the word of God is indispensable in the work of the religious training of children. It has lessons suited to the teachers, and other lessons especially adapted to the taught. It descends to the plane of infant thought, and it transcends the wisdom of angels, linking heaven to earth and man to God.

One of the important statements of Swedenborg, lying at the very foundation of his doctrine, relates to the *spiritual* structure of the initial germ from which a child is evolved. In spiritual light, it is in the form of a tiny brain. The upper part of the structure consists of "contiguous globules or spherules," and each spherule is itself a dense cluster of other spherules still more minute, while each of these again is in its turn composed of yet other infinitesimal spherules, which are the most perfect and precious of all.

Thus in the vital rudiment, from whence the spirit of a man is developed, there are three degrees. The two interior degrees are in the order and form of heaven, and are thus the habitations of life from the Lord, being receptacles of His love and wisdom. But the exterior degree is in direct opposition to that order; and in it reside the outer corruptions or hereditary evils into which every man is born.

In accordance with this fundamental doctrine concerning the spiritual structure of the germ from whence the child is evolved, it is understood that hereditary evils do not extend themselves into the higher degrees of the soul. Those superior regions within the human spirit are always open to the Lord; but they are not opened to the child, nor to the man, except in proportion as the hereditary corruptions of the outer life are put away and order restored to the last or natural degree.

The training of a child is therefore directed to the gradual reduction of the disorders and evil tendencies resident in the outermost or natural spheres of life. This can only be effected by slow processes; and by moral prohibitions. In the beginning of His Divine Revelations to Israel, the Lord first applied the precepts of the decalogue, in which the words "Thou shalt not" obtained the pre-eminent place.

The methods by which the Lord averts the influences of hereditary evil in the natural degree of a child's life are not always the same. In the earliest years, they may be said to be beautiful; but they differ in the more advanced stages.

Primarily, the Lord Himself is always the Guardian and Protector of the child's life, and He never consents to anything that could prevent the possibility of salvation to His little ones. He is nearer to them than any angel ever can be: for His Presence is actual, natural, and personal to every child instructed in the Christian faith. It was of His Divine love to say—"Suffer the little children to come unto Me."

"Every infant or little child, let him be born where he may, whether in the Church or out of it, whether of pious or wicked persons, is received by the Lord when he dies; . . . and is imbued with affections of good, and, through them, with the knowledge of truth. . . . Afterwards, as he is perfected in intelligence and wisdom, he is admitted into heaven, and becomes an angel" (*Heaven and Hell*, 329).

"It is not the will of your Father who is in the heavens that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. xviii. 14).

But the Lord's care for the children who remain in this world, and grow up amidst its dangers and snares, is not less than His care for those who die. He is as much with the children here as there. Although infants in this world "do not know what charity is, and still less what faith is, nevertheless the Lord is more present with them than with adults, especially when the infants are in mutual love" (*A. C.*[1] 1100). During their early years, their "communication with the Lord is by the affections only"; and by that means the exterior life of the child is controlled (*A. C.* 1900).

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[1] *Arcana Cœlestia.*

It is provided that the ideas of infants, which are gentle and innocent, shall, at this period, be "openable even to the Lord." "For the Lord inflows in an especial manner from the inmost into the ideas of infants" (*A. C.* 2291). Thus the most potent of the early influences in the process of forming a child's mind are influences from the Lord and the celestial angels; and even the infantile ideas are—as Swedenborg says—"openable to the Lord" (*A. C.* 2291).

A second means by which the Lord counteracts the influences of hereditary evils in the natural degree of the child's spirit is by never allowing those evils to become active during the earliest years of life. "From his infancy to his first childhood, a man is introduced by the Lord into heaven, and in fact among angels, through whom he is kept by the Lord in a state of innocence" (*A. C.* 5342). His introduction into that state is "in order that it may be the plane for all other states, and the inmost of them all" (*A. C.* 3183). The reason why it is impossible for evil spirits to approach infants, or to excite their hereditary tendencies to evil, is "because they have not as yet anything in the memory that evil spirits can put on." With infants, therefore, "There are only good spirits and angels" (*A. C.* 5857). "Their angels do always behold the face of My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 10).

It is well known, however, that the goodness of infantile innocence and all the other good affections implanted in early childhood are devoid of external fixity, and of that permanence which only belongs to established habit, voluntarily adopted in the practice of one who understands and chooses for himself. The innocence of infants, who are in ignorance, does not continue much beyond the fifth year, or it changes its quality; and it invariably passes away so soon as the hereditary evils hidden in the natural mind begin to arise.

When this period is reached, there is then evident need for a different series of provisions, by which the disadvantages arising from hereditary evils may be effectually counteracted. At this stage our Lord not only continues the protection of His own Presence, — though it is less evident — but He also supplies new means by which He still secures the moral freedom necessary to human life and religious principle.

In the first place, He "indraws," and stores up in the interiors of the child's spirit all the good affections of innocence, kindness, and peace which have existed with the child from his birth. Whatever good has been beforetime divinely insinuated "is indrawn towards the interiors; and is there kept by the Lord, in order that by means of it the states of life which he afterwards puts on may be tempered" (*A. C.* 3793). It is because these good affections are thus preserved, and remain, that they are technically called "*remains*." They are not acquisitions obtained by learning, but rather living gifts, bestowed upon the soul itself; and the more of them the child receives, the more delightful and beautiful do the states of childhood appear when they return to him in after-life (*A. C.* 1906).

A later provision by which the Lord averts the dangers due to hereditary evils, consists in His continual government of the child, or the youth, by means of particular spirits and angels, who, unconsciously to the child himself, become identified with his mind and memory. "The same spirits do not remain at all times"; but they are changed as the states of the child or man may change. Such spirits do *not know* that they are adjoined to anyone in this life (*A. C.* 5862); but, under the Providence of the Lord, they act as one with the child, whilst he thinks that he acts of himself alone; and they also think that they act of themselves alone.

In the more advanced stages of childhood, when temptations arise, this identity of thinking between the child and his attendant spirit or angel is the means of beneficent rule; because by this means the hereditary evils of the child are restrained. By his identity of thinking with particular spirits, who *are afraid* of the consequences of evil actions, the child is prevented from rushing into every enormity that would arise out of his own love of self and gain. By means of the mediate inflow of life through spirits in similar affections to his own, the child's freedom is preserved, while yet it is possible for the Lord to turn him away from evils, to amend his purposes, and gradually to reduce his external mind to an order corresponding with the order of heaven. It is because the child's external love of self is hereditarily "altogether contrary to heavenly order that he is ruled through spirits and angels from the Lord" (*A. C.* 5850). This government is a vital part of the child's spiritual environment.

The final means of counteracting both hereditary and actual evils are those provided in the home and schools; and among them the Lord's precepts are first. But the application of them is to be made under the provisions by which the Lord has secured the child's moral freedom at every stage of his career. He is never to be deprived of the liberty wherein he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

Every parent is therefore justified in being re-assured as he approaches the question of his own part in the training of his child; and, if he has confidence in the Lord, he may cheerfully yet seriously ask, "How can I best help in the preparation of my child for the heaven for which he has been created? By what means can I ensure that he shall learn to shun evils because they are against the Lord? How can I best teach him to flee from them; to obey the holy precepts, and to delight in the useful and the good because it is from God?"

To these questions many admirable replies may be given; but it ought to be recognised from the first that *restraint* is necessary in the making of a man.

The Rev. B. Worcester, of Waltham, Mass., has illustrated the very beginning of this by reference to a babe sleeping in his mother's arms. The mother knows that he should not be long there; so she smooths his pillow, and lays him down. He cries; not from discomfort, but for the warmth and luxury of her arms. Being a wise mother, she will not easily yield, but kindly insists on his lying down. Aided by weariness and a little gentle pressure, the child is controlled, and sinks into a peaceful sleep. A victory is gained, though it appears very slight. The child has submitted to a little restraint; and that is vital in the beginning of a new will.

The same writer, who is the principal of an important New Church school, gives another illustration. A child "can show a tooth or two, and eat a cookie"; but he sees another in his sister's hand, and he thinks he can eat two. This is the opportunity to teach him that the whole world does not belong to him, and that he must respect his sister's rights. The lesson may tax all the quiet patience and firmness of the mother; but it will make a lasting impression, and will be a step in the making of a man.

If such discipline, kind yet wise, is continued through the early years, the first part of the training will be well done; but, if it is not, the child's freedom will be abused; and he will think himself at liberty to be as selfish and wicked as he likes. In that case, he is shaping to become the slave of his own evils, and to be carried into spiritual bondage.

The practice of "leaving a child in freedom" is in many cases admirable and wise; but it must be modified by considerations as to the nature of the freedom. It ought never to be forgotten that infernal freedom is quite opposite to that heavenly freedom which consists in doing one's duty from a religious principle, and thus out of the fear of sinning against God; for *in* that fear is love to the Lord Himself and love towards the neighbour.

Restraint and obedience go together. To learn obedience is to restrain self-love. There is no justification for "hoping" that the child will restrain himself if he is not taught to obey; and led to look beyond the seen and temporal to the unseen and the Divine. There is an old rhyme quoted by Mr Worcester in this connection—

> The infant reared alone for earth
> May live, yea die, to curse its birth.

The first period of a child's life is "from birth to the fifth year" (*A. C.* 10,223); but "the good of infancy is up to the tenth" (*A. C.* 2280). As far as possible, the Lord leads by His Divine love and according to His Divine wisdom. He is the Good Shepherd to the child; but still it is often difficult to realise this when the hereditary evils have begun to appear. Sometimes parents can see no evidence of either Divine guidance or angelic ministrations. On the contrary, the children may become so provocative of displeasure and pain that their seniors may describe them, in the rough language of the world, as "little devils," on account of the evils that begin to

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come forth and ostensibly defy the order of heaven. But this naughtiness does not in any way detract from the fact that, even in those rebellions, the holier affections of heaven are in such nearness that the saddest scenes of human perversity may be speedily changed for the honourable and beautiful, if only the parents or teachers do their part, and the lessons of restraint and self-control are well learned.

The order of a child's mental development described in the doctrine of the New Church is that in which sensuous truth is the first to insinuate itself. Such truth, in the ordinary child, consists of outward facts and thoughts that pleasantly affect him. As he understands and delights in the natural things of which he has become cognisant, he becomes in that small measure *scientific.* When he learns how to apply facts or natural truths with some measure of judgment, he is becoming *rational.* It is only when he regards the Lord as the best Teacher, and loves the Divine ends which He has in view, that he can be said to receive something *spiritual.*

Swedenborg writes: "From his infancy to his childhood, a man is merely sensuous; for he then receives nothing but earthly, bodily, and worldly things through the sensuals of the body; and by these, too, at that time, are his ideas and thoughts" (*A. C.* 5126). "Regarded in itself, the truth which is learned from childhood is nothing but a fit vessel into which the celestial can insinuate itself" (*A. C.* 1496).

The influx of ideas into a child's mind is never from the outside. His ideas of lambs, cattle, and birds are not derived from the sight of such animals; but when they are seen, they provide the opportunity for the inflow of ideas to which they correspond; and so far as the child is able "to apprehend and retain" those ideas, so far communication with the interior spirit has begun. It is plain, therefore, that the interior mind of the child is then in some measure opened (*A. C.* 5126).

The subject of ideas is so important in the training of a child that it claims further attention. All men are to some extent alive to the great advantage, or the danger, of what are called "ideas"; and it has been noticed by many writers that an idea may so far win its way into the mind of a child or youth as to become almost masterful. In the period of the "teens," and after, it is often found that mischievous ideas have obtained what appears to be an independent power,—a power of intruding themselves unbidden, and even against the young man's will. But the truth is that the oftener an idea is invited, the greater becomes its activity, and its chance of obtaining a paramount place in the affections of a youth. Generally speaking, therefore, the person who is afflicted by the assertive persistence of an evil idea has himself to blame.

In the training of a child, it is necessary to adopt means that the central and supreme places may be gained by ideas that are true and good. In very young children the ideas are few; and it is easy to find a place for a new one. Ideas are wanted. But after years have multiplied, conceptions that are really new fare very differently. Consequently, parents and teachers should be to the fore with those that are the most vital and most useful. Among these, the practical truths of the Christian religion come first.

The training of a child in the New Church is always distinctly theological in the practical sense — but not abstractly theoretical. The child is taught that the Lord is actually present; that He is Jehovah, the Lord from eternity, who has come into the world; that the Divine Trinity in Him is represented in man by the soul, the body, and the outgoing energy; that "the Father"—so often mentioned in the Gospels—means the "Divine Good" in Him; that "the Son" means the Divine Humanity or Glorified Body in which He is to be approached; and that the "Holy

Spirit" is His virtue and operation in saving mankind. The effect of such teaching is to present Jehovah God as the one Divine Man; and it is intended by that means to enable even a child to perceive that the term "Son of God" can be understood without any family sense, and applied to the Humanity of God Himself.

In respect to the place of Swedenborg, the children are taught that he was a prepared servant, through whose instrumentality the Lord gave to the world a knowledge of the Internal Sense of Holy Scripture, the laws of Divine interpretation, and the Christian Doctrine as it is understood and received by angels in heaven. Swedenborg is never more than the Lord's servant and scribe. It was the Lord Himself, not Swedenborg, who alone was able to "take the book and to loose the seals thereof." Nor are the children ever taught to call the New Church "Swedenborgian." On the contrary, the name of Christian is alone acknowledged.

In the education given to children, the place of Holy Scripture is never surrendered to any other book. It is held to be of Divine origin, and to contain in itself the fulness of celestial and spiritual truths.

"All the historicals of the Word are truths somewhat remote from Divine teachings themselves, but still they are of service to infants and children, in order to introduce them into the interior teachings of truths and good by degrees, and at length into the essential Divine teachings" (*A. C.* 3690). "The historical parts were given on this account, that little children, and boys, may be initiated thereby into the reading of the Word, for these parts are delightful, and gain a place in their minds, by which communication is thus given them with the heavens" (*A. C.* 6335).

In harmony with these things, it is customary to use all suitable portions of Bible history; to speak of the Lord's coming into the world; of the New Dispensation that He inaugurated when He opened to view the Internal Sense within the Word; of His miracles and parables; of His transfiguration and resurrection; of His ascension and appearance to John as an "Angel standing in the sun." The child is taught that His Providence supplies our wants, and enters into all things of life; that He makes the earth fruitful, and dispenses untold good for all.

It is also regarded as part of the training of a child that it should be taught to acknowledge the nearness of the unseen world. Children can think of two worlds, both actual, more easily than adults; and they can also realise that the outer or natural world corresponds to the spiritual world, which is more perfect and nearer the Lord.

Last of all, the child is taught that he should allow himself to be led by the Lord, "in freedom, and according to reason"; that he must not act from self-will, but listen to the Divine One, who is ever saying "Follow Me."

It is a help to parents to remember that children are kept by the Lord in an affirmative disposition, inclining them to believe "that what is said by parents and masters is true" (*A. C.* 2689). This affirmative disposition is widely influential, and it greatly enhances the responsibility resting on all who share in the training of the young.

In no case is it ever allowable to separate truth from its own good, or faith from the vital charity which alone connects it with the Lord. To the child's mind, good actions only appear good because they are believed to be pleasing to the Lord and conformable to His commandments. Evil actions are evil, because they are against God, and thus against the order by which He secures the welfare of the human race. It comes perfectly natural to a child to acknowledge the Lord and heaven, or the craft and wickedness of evil spirits. Practically children are always being asked whom they will serve —the Lord, or devils?

There is no room for doubting the fact that children are able to receive religious impressions; and, with the Holy Scriptures full of spiritual and Divine truths, it is possible to convey to them invaluable lessons that will bring untold blessings, and secure a central place in their affections for the attractive goodness of the Lord. We have no hesitation in saying that one of the first lessons should be taught in these words, "O taste and see that the Lord is good."

J. J. THORNTON.

GLASGOW.

X

THE RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF CHILDREN AMONG THE JEWS

In no denomination does the religious training of children take a higher place than among the Jews. It goes without saying that every religious denomination must of necessity depend for its stability upon the care expended in the direction of child-training. It would, perhaps, be too much to say that more attention has been expended in this direction by Jews than by other religionists, but it is no exaggeration to assert that Judaism has been, through a variety of circumstances, more dependent for the religion of its men and women upon the religion of its children than any other denomination of equal standing.

The reason for this is twofold. First, Judaism is a religion which teems with ceremonial and is hedged around with various ritual observances and a manifold disability of restriction, all of which are characteristic of observant Judaism, assert themselves very early in domestic training, and depend for their continuance in grown-up life entirely upon their intelligibility to the child, upon the place they assume in his sacred associations and in the loyalty implanted in his young mind and heart.

The second distinctive element is found in the fact that Judaism has for so many centuries stood before the world as a religion of general nonconformity. Allegiance to its principles has been in some instances a matter of martyrdom, and in all cases a question of self-sacrifice and an appreciable amount of disability. One of the most important features in the training of a Jewish child inevitably and unconsciously takes the shape of preparation for this disability, of explanation that his denomination is in a distinct minority, of anticipation of the restrictions it imposes, and of furnishing an armoury sufficiently strong to be proof against the temptation to waver in allegiance to a creed which is appreciably unpopular.

One of the first things that a Jewish child learns is that the term "Jew" is one of opprobrium in so many places. If he does not learn it from his unthinking Christian school-fellows, or from the brutality of the streets where it still survives, it dawns upon him as he reads his history, and, as a general rule, his brave young heart is already prepared, at a time when other children know nothing of such problems, to meet with and to combat misunderstanding and injustice.

Judaism, however, had not to wait until modern times for the exaltation as a religious duty of the care for the upbringing of the child. Already, in the first throes of the birth of the nationality, the spirit of Judaism foreshadowed the interest of the child in the first ordinance prescribed by Moses to the newlyformed people — viz. that of the Passover. "And it shall come to pass when your children ask you, 'What is the meaning of this?'" Nothing was to take anything like a high place in Jewish ceremony unless accompanied by the awakening of the interest of the children and the satisfying of that interest when aroused. Modern Jewish ceremony is still loyal to this initial prescription of the faith for the whole of the Passover home celebration. The most important and the most impressive of all Jewish domestic ceremonies hinges upon the questions of the children, and the place of highest importance in the ceremony is that of the youngest of the children who may be present. Nowhere, perhaps, does the duty of child-education assert itself with greater eminence, or with more simple impressiveness, than in the classic words occurring in that Bible passage which forms, one might say, the Magna Charta of the Jewish Creed: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. vi. 6, 7). There never has been any misconception as to the meaning of these words, there being nothing more clear throughout all the Rabbinical writings than the complete comprehension that when the Bible says: "And *thou* shalt teach them unto *thy* children," it means that the duty of religious training belongs to the parent, cannot be delegated to strangers, however competent, and is the highest privilege and responsibility of fatherhood and motherhood.

One of the sources of the strength of the Jewish position in this respect has always been the complete accord existing between parents and teachers. The Talmud, that wonderful record of all phases of Jewish feeling, is as full of the duty to teachers as it is of the duty to parents. "Let the fear of your teacher be like the fear of Heaven," say the

Rabbis, and it is, perhaps, not so much to the intellectuality of the Jew as it is to the recognition by the Jewish parent that the teacher of his children is his *alter ego* that we have to look for an explanation of the remarkable successes of Jewish children in the public schools. The Talmud says: "There is no poverty except ignorance," and there is sufficient of the true Jewish spirit in this aphorism to make Jews proud and to cause others to ponder.

It will be easily understood that the sense of history is very strong in the Jew and is awakened very early in the training of his child. Ordinary boys and girls learn the history of their country; but while the Jewish child learns the history of England, learns it as his own, and takes pride in it accordingly, he learns the Bible as his own history, and its influence as such is an enormous lever in his religious education. Waterloo and Trafalgar, Harfleur and Agincourt, Cressy and Poictiers, make the ordinary English child swell with pride; but their effect is slight indeed compared with the spirit with which the Jewish child reads of the passage of the Red Sea, of the journeyings in the wilderness, and of the battles of David, and knows that there flows within his own veins the blood of those who made his nation great and distinguished when Greece and Rome were struggling into existence, and when the great powers of the modern world were undreamed of by civilised men. Hence it is that while the great Bible stories have so much to teach the ordinary child, they are to his Jewish compeer his own racial epic, and he grows up with the feeling of racial continuity glowing within his heart as an incentive and inspiration unparalleled in the religious education of any other child.

I regret that there is no space within the limits of this article to deal with all the ceremonies of Judaism especially concerned with the needs of children. Perhaps the most beautiful of all is that of the Sabbath Eve, when the head of the household places his hands upon the bowed heads of his children and blesses them in the words in which Jacob uttered his blessing to the sons of Joseph.

The modern Synagogue retains some interesting survivals, to this date, of the old-time consideration for the needs of the child's education in reference to public worship. The precentor or "reader" of the prayers in the Synagogue still bears the name of Chazon. The term nowadays denominates the minister or other person who conducts the service of prayer, but it originally meant one who looks around (a curious parallel to the "*Episkopos*" of the Church). The function of this official was originally to go round the Synagogue to keep order among the children and to see that each child followed the service in the prayer-book in the proper place. Out of this office grew the Jewish ministry, and no one who understands Judaism can wonder at the connection.

The Synagogue perhaps affords the only instance of a service of prayer a regular part of which is set apart for children.

Every Jewish boy on reaching the age of thirteen attains his religious majority, sometimes called in modern Judaism by the somewhat misleading name of "Confirmation." The Hebrew term is "Barmitzvah," which literally translated means a son of duty, that is, one who has reached an age when the full obligation of religious duty can be understood and assumed. On the first Sabbath after the attainment of the age of thirteen, the boy attends the Synagogue and reads a portion of the law from the lesson of that particular day. Of course, he is prepared in advance, and the event is the turning-point in the boy's religious history. There is nothing more characteristically Jewish or more charming in modern Jewish ceremony than the place of the boy, when on this occasion the public service of prayer is hushed to listen to the childish voice reciting the words of the law. But if he possesses the ability, the boy needs not to wait until he is thirteen to take part in the Synagogue service. He may not read part of the weekly portion from the Pentateuch, but there is in addition to the lesson from the Pentateuch a shorter lesson from the prophets, and this the child may read, and very frequently does, as soon as he is able.

Once a year, on the Feast of the Rejoicing of the Law, all the boys in the congregation ascend the reading desk, and together recite the blessing which on ordinary occasions is read by those who are called to the reading of the law. The orthodox Synagogue service affords no similar opportunity for the girls. The Orientalism clinging to the Synagogue still keeps all women and girls to the galleries, while the floor of the Synagogue, together with participation in the service, is reserved for the men and the boys. But within recent years the need has been recognised for some ceremony which shall exercise for the girls the same influence that the Barmitzvah has over the boys, and in most modern Synagogues conducted on liberal lines, a special service for girls is held at least once a year. In this case there is a class of preparation in the tenets of the faith, while the service includes the public recital by the girls of a special prayer and a charge from the pulpit by the officiating minister.

The access of Jews to the privileges of higher education, the eagerness with which it has been seized, the opening of the great public schools to Jewish children, and the corresponding diminution in specific Jewish denominational schools, has militated somewhat against the acquisition by Jewish children of the knowledge of Hebrew which originally was a *sine qua non* in Jewish education. This is partly met by private tuition and to a large extent by the establishment in connection with every large Synagogue of religious classes, which Jewish children attend as a rule on Sunday mornings. But the fact still remains that in denominational schools where Hebrew forms a part of the ordinary curriculum, the time given to the study of Hebrew does not in any way prejudice the progress of the children in secular subjects.

I have dealt with that phase of child-religion which is specifically Jewish, and it has, of necessity, hinged upon specifically Jewish ceremonial. So far as the ethical side of religion is concerned, the upbringing of Jewish children in principles of integrity, piety, unselfishness, personal purity and personal righteousness presents no features different to those which make up the education of other children, class for class. These must be guided, of course, by personal bent, and belong to that class of religious teaching of which it can now be said that it is the monopoly of no creed, and the duty of all, and of which I trust the same will be said and felt for all time.

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Hampstead Synagogue.

XI

THE CHILD AND THE BIBLE

In this paper I shall discuss how best we may use the Bible as a means of educating children, *i.e.* of quickening and informing their intelligence, instilling correct and powerful moral principles and training them to be loyal and useful servants of Christ.

Perhaps the first step in education is to teach a child the meaning of words, *i.e.* to give him names for the persons and things he sees around and for the thoughts they evoke in him. This involves the important mental exercise of discriminating different objects and ideas. The child thus becomes, in increasing measure, master of a language; and learns to receive ideas through the lips of others, touching things he has not himself seen.

Another early branch of education is to learn to read. This still further widens the pupil's mental vision by enabling him to receive knowledge not merely through human lips but from the silent printed page. Through this important medium, he comes into contact with thought and life far removed from himself in time and place; in some cases, with a thought and life much higher than that of the men and women by whom he is surrounded.

Reading thus introduces him into the great world of literature, which in all ages has been a great school of culture. The mental horizon of the man who cannot read is bounded by the little world which he can himself see and hear and touch. Ability to read marks off the lower civilisation, as compared with Christain nations, of China and Persia from the unlettered savages of Africa. The great religions of the world, by putting books into the hands of their votaries, have rendered immense service to human culture.

Among all the books of the world, one

volume holds, by unanimous consent of all the foremost nations, a place of unique superiority. This is seen in its wide circulation, the time and toil spent in its exposition, and in its influence on the hearts and lives of the most intelligent and devout men. If any book claims to be read, and promises abundant recompense to those who read it, *i.e.* if any book is a fit instrument of education, intellectual, moral, and religious, that book is the Bible.

What is the secret of this remarkable superiority? The unique book contains the earliest account of the life and teaching of a unique personality; and traces back His antecedents to a unique ancient nationality. By a recognition rapidly becoming universal, Jesus of Nazareth stands absolutely alone as incomparably the greatest and best of men. He reigns in the hearts of unnumbered thousands in every position of life as the loftiest ideal of excellence they have ever seen and the most powerful moral influence they have ever felt. To Him, all that is best in us bows with lowly homage as to a pattern we are bound to imitate: and He is to us a stimulus for all that is good. This lofty ideal, our loyalty to Christ requires us to put as early as possible before the eyes and in the hearts of the young around us.

Associated with Christ in the New Testament are other characters good and bad, some of them painted in vivid colours. These greatly enlarge and make clearer our knowledge of Him. To them were spoken His recorded words; and these last we can understand only by hearing the words to which they were replies, or by knowing something about the actions which evoked them. These men were His personal environment; and, on the pages of the New Testament, they are the framework of our picture of Him. Many of them are of special interest to us as the agents through whose activity Christ became the Saviour of the world.

This supreme personality and these subordinates around Him are known to us, with rational certainty, only through the New Testament, which contains all the earliest extant Christian literature.

Another well-known collection of books, not equal to the New Testament, but holding a second place, far above all others, in the religious literature of the world, is the Old Testament. This contains the entire earliest literature of the nation from which Christ sprang; and in it we can trace, in a unique national history, the steps leading up to the great movement which sprang from Him and has changed for good the entire current of human thought and life. Only by these earlier steps, confined within the narrow limits of one small nationality, can we understand the world-wide and world-transforming influence of Christ.

The Bible contains also abundant teaching about God, His will concerning us, and the blessings He waits to bestow.

All this indicates the use we may make

of the Bible in the training of the child. We shall find in it (1) a series of most interesting and instructive biographies; (2) a unique ancient history; (3) moral and religious teaching from the lips of incomparably the greatest Teacher the world has ever known. In all these respects, the Bible is by far the greatest and best of school-books.

The men and women around the child are his earliest lesson-books in the school of morals. He soon begins to discriminate, and pronounce judgment upon, different types of character, accepting, perhaps unconsciously, some men as patterns, and turning from others with aversion. It is all-important to supplement these lessons by a circle of characters wider than his own acquaintances, to put before him men moving in circumstances other than his own, and themselves of loftier stature. In books we often look more deeply into the springs of action and into character than we can do with persons living around us. Moreover, we can talk more freely about men at a distance than we can about those closely related to us; and about these last, our judgments are apt to be warped by personal bias. Moreover, the lapse of ages enables us better to estimate character. Biography has always been a most effective school of morals.

The Bible contains portraits of men and women in all positions in life and of utmost variety of character, some of them of colossal greatness. Into this glorious picture gallery of living portraits, it is our privilege to lead the children. Even to little ones we can tell the story of Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon, Daniel, of John the Baptist, Peter, and of Paul. As years roll by, we can, with increasing profit, repeat the lesson. The acquaintances in this way made in childhood will be the companions and helpers of manhood and old age. Thus in childhood we may lay a foundation of a moral environment which will be to us through life a school, a refuge, and a home.

All other Bible characters must be put in conspicuous subordination to One Supreme Personality. The brightest of them are but planets revolving round the sun. This being so, the story and character and teaching of Christ must have a conspicuously central place in our Bible teaching. We shall tell about the shepherds and the wise men from the East, the Boy asking questions in the sacred precincts, the great preacher pointing to one greater than himself, about the miracles and parables of Christ, the Last Supper, the arrest in the garden, His cruel death, His burial by Joseph and Nicodemus, the empty grave, the journey to Emmaus, the appearance to the disciples in the evening, another appearance a week later when Thomas was there, the appearance in Galilee and the miraculous draught of fishes, and the ascent from Olivet. These incidents will afford us an inexhaustible treasury of most valuable teaching. Moreover, since the real moral grandeur of Christ, and its infinite superiority to all other human greatness, are seen only in the light of the glory which for our sakes He laid aside, in His case theology must be interwoven with biography. And this interweaving of the human and divine in Christ is the best introduction, for young pupils, to the superhuman dignity of Christ. Similarly, with Abraham and Moses, the character of the man can be correctly appreciated only in the light of his relation to the great purposes of God. Thus their greatness will shed light upon Him whose forerunners they were. This subordination of all Bible characters to Christ must be ever kept in view.

As an introduction to history, it is well, with children under our continuous charge, to take these characters in chronological order. And each new character should be put in comparison and contrast with earlier ones. Thus the learners will come instinctively to weave biography into history, and to note the development of human life from age to age.

The history of Israel is the earliest and by far the most instructive in literature. Moreover, while the remains of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon have for long centuries lain buried under the sands of the desert, the story of ancient Israel has, in all progressive nations, been read, to great profit, throughout the Christian era. And even now that the long buried ruins have been disinterred, and abundant evidence has been found, in addition to the vivid pictures in the Old Testament, of the very early civilisation and even of the religious thought of Egypt, we find in all the relics of the past little that is worth the name of history, little to shed light on the intellectual and moral growth of the nation and thus help us to-day. But in the Old Testament we see, clearly depicted, the early antecedents, the birth and growth, and the strange fortunes, of Israel, a story and a series of living pictures without parallel in the literature of the world.

The unique strangeness of this story bears on almost every page the marks of truth. We have a terrible picture of helpless and hopeless bondage in Egypt; Israel's marvellous deliverance, not by a national uprising, but under guidance of a man claiming divine authority; the long wandering in the wilderness, as a punishment of unfaithfulness; and the settlement in Canaan. Then the curtain falls; and the consecutive narrative is broken off. When it is lifted, we find Israel again in bondage to one after another of the surrounding tribes, bondage so complete that even instruments of agriculture were denied them.

Then follows, in a connected narrative, the story of the kingdom from its rise to its fall. We have the prophet Samuel laying the foundation of a theocratic state, the strange reign of Saul, the empire built up with oriental rapidity by David, its brilliant bloom under Solomon, bearing, however, even before his death, marks of decay. At once follows the divided kingdom; the successive revolutions, the deep fall into idolatry, the persecution of the servants of Jehovah, and the early captivity, of the northern kingdom; the greater faithfulness of Judah, some good kings who endeavoured to maintain the ancient worship of God, and the concentration of worship around Jerusalem, till it also is carried away to a far-off bondage, and the temple lies in ruins.

This story of Israel brings also into view the greater empires around, especially Egypt and Assyria, and afterwards Babylon; thus keeping them before the eyes of Europe long before their remains were disinterred in modern times. This wider view gives us a nobler conception of history as a presentation of the development not of some one race, but of the human race as a whole.

Then follows the marvellous return from captivity, and the restoration of the nation and of the public worship of God under Persian rule. The subsequent history of Israel under Greek rule can easily be filled in from other sources, until in the New

Testament the curtain is lifted by the births of John the Baptist and Jesus under Roman rule. We have casual mention of three Roman emperors, Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius. But for a time history is lost in biography, while our gaze is fixed on one supreme personality; and, after His disappearance, on the progress of the movement to which He had given birth.

All this contains important lessons. The story of Israel will give, even to a child, a conception of the life of a nation, of its rise, chequered history, fall, resurrection, and second fall; and of the rise from among its ruins of a world-transforming movement. Even to little children, the story may be told as an interesting narrative; and, as they grow older, from the narrative repeated and supplemented, they will gain, with increasing clearness and breadth, a conception of the real significance of all history and of the historic development of the kingdom of God. A less, but real, gain is the addition to their memory of many interesting and useful facts.

Other lessons vastly more important than the above will result from a skilful use of the Bible as a means of education. The Holy Scriptures are primarily a record of supernatural revelations from God to man touching the unseen and eternal realities which underlie human thought and life. To place these, as fully and accurately as possible, before the minds and in the hearts of our children, is the true aim of all religious education.

The story of Israel differs infinitely from all others in that God is, in it, Himself the chief actor. The first chapter of the Bible pays homage to Him as existing before the universe, which it represents, with all its contents lifeless and living, as springing into being at His bidding and as absolutely subject to His sway. In the following chapters, the Creator of the World claims man's obedience, confidence, and love; and reveals Himself as the friend and helper, and the righteous judge of all men. In the New Testament we hear the voice of a supreme Teacher in human form who claims for Himself the homage due to God, and claims that we can serve God only by serving Him whom God sent into the world. He calls himself the Son of God, the only-begotten Son; and announces that He will come again to judge all men, to give eternal life to those who follow Him, and to punish most severely those who refuse to obey Him. In other words, the whole Bible tells of a world unseen, of persons infinitely greater than those around us, and of endless life and blessing for the righteous.

All this is intensely interesting to children. It arouses their curiosity, and evokes the sense of awe ever latent even in immature intelligence. Of this attractiveness, the teacher may make good use as a means of instilling, at the most receptive period of life, lessons of utmost value.

The earliest lessons in religion should be about the reality and nearness of God, watching all we do and hearing all we say, our loving Father, watching us that He may protect and help, yet because He loves us, requiring from us obedience and love, and punishing disobedience. Closely following this teaching about God must come the great lesson that life on earth is but the beginning of what may be an endless life of infinite blessing in our Father's house above. Along with this the teacher must seek to evoke a sense of sin, as ingratitude to infinite love. While thus endeavouring to lead his charge to repentance, he will find place for God's promise to pardon sin and to save us from sinning.

Great care should be taken to set before children, so far as they can understand it, the teaching of the New Testament about the superhuman dignity of Christ. This may be done to a far larger extent than is generally supposed. For instance, the meaning of the great title *The Son of God*, conspicuous throughout the New Testament, may be illustrated by the parable of the vineyard, in Matt. xxi. 37. Here, in contrast to earlier messengers who were only *servants*, Christ is called the master's *son*; and the master says that, although the unfaithful vine-dressers have ill-treated and slain them, they will not venture to injure him. Every child knows the essential difference between the master's son and the highest of his servants. And this clearly understood difference may be used by the teacher as a means of instilling a conception of the infinite superiority of Christ to the greatest to men, *e.g.* to Moses or John the Baptist. The impression thus made may be deepened by the abundant teaching, by various New Testament writers, *e.g.* Matt. vii. 23, xvi. 27, xxv. 31, John v. 28, 29, Acts xvii. 31, 2 Cor. v. 10, that Christ will be the Judge of the World. This may easily be illustrated to children by describing a criminal court of justice, where the accused stands trembling in the dock, while the judge sits in dignity and power and pronounces an irresistible judgment. In the great day, when even the greatest and best will themselves be judged, Christ claimed that He will sit in splendour and power as their judge.

The doctrine of the Spirit of God presents greater, though by no means insuperable, difficulties. We may give the child a rudimentary yet real conception of psychology by speaking of the unseen principle moving from within all living things, the seat of intelligence and emotion, distinguishing them from the lifeless objects around. We can then speak of the Spirit of God in Samson, Bezaleel, David, and the prophets, moving them from within and making them to be virtually the arm and hand and voice of God, and thus producing results far above the power of man. This will enable the teacher to say that Christ, when about to leave the world, promised to give His Spirit to dwell in His servants as their guide and strength and as Himself in them the Breath of immortal life. It is all-important to teach the young, as early as possible, that in the struggle of life they do not fight alone and in their own strength, but that with them and in them is a divine Helper who will by His own presence supply all their need.

An essential element of all religious education is to evoke in our pupils a consciousness of personal sin and sinfulness, and of their need of pardon for the past and of deliverance in the future from the power of sin. While announcing pardon, we must point to the death of Christ on the cross as the mysterious channel of forgiveness and as an amazing proof of the infinite love of Him who gave His Son to die for men. We must also teach that He who died for them now claims their unreserved devotion to His great work of saving the world.

The doctrine of the Church is also within the comprehension of children. We can talk to them about the Good Shepherd and the Flock needing and having His guidance and protection, and of the need that lambs keep near to the shepherd; also of the great temple of which His followers are living stones united each to the others and all resting upon the great Foundation Stone, all the stones being also both builders and worshippers.

We must also speak of the City of God, the glorious and eternal home of the family of God; and warn our pupils that no evil person will enter there.

In short, by an intelligent use of metaphor and parable, the whole round of theology, *i.e.* of the saving truths revealed by God to man, may in no small measure be brought to bear helpfully on the thought of children, so as to mould and raise their whole future thought.

It will be noticed that the above theological teaching does not involve denominational differences, *i.e.* such differences as divide the various organised Christian communions. By emphasising these important doctrines, we set before our pupils, not the disagreements, but the agreements, of the followers of Christ. We thus help them to accept as brethren an immense majority of all who call themselves Christians. To teach children doctrines about which Christians differ, is to sow division among the servants of Christ and to rend His seamless robe. Fortunately the doctrines which bear most closely on personal religion, which is the true aim of Bible teaching, are common to all churches. On the other hand, to pass over the doctrines in which the Gospel of Christ differs from all other religious beliefs, is to leave untaught that which our pupils most need to know.

The above elements of biography, history, and theology should be closely interwoven. The various characters so vividly depicted on the sacred page will at once arrest attention and teach important moral lessons. Taken in chronological order, they will give a true conception of history as a record of the development of national life. Placed in due subordination to Him, they will throw into relief the unique and supreme dignity of Christ. Moreover, this last can be understood only by the teaching of the New Testament about the infinite grandeur which for a time He laid aside in order to come into the world to save men by revealing to them the infinite love of God and by setting before them the infinite example of His own devotion to God, and to the work of mercy which He came to accomplish. The principles underlying God's moral government of the world are also illustrated by the story of ancient Israel, and even by the casual references to the nations around. Taken together in their mutual relations, the biography, history, and religious teaching, preserved for us by the kind providence of God in the Bible, afford a means of education in morals and religion suitable for all, and of infinite value.

A few words now about the method of teaching. With little children, we shall do well to begin by ourselves narrating in our own simple words the story of Christ, laying due emphasis on His death, resurrection, and ascension, and by reproducing the simpler elements of His teaching; supplementing these by the story of the apostles and of the founding of the Church. As an agreeable contrast, we may go back to the story of the patriarchs, of Moses and the Exodus, of the prophets and kings, of the Exile and the Return. Our first aim will be to fix events as fully and clearly and extensively as we can in the memories of our pupils; and while doing this we shall be able to imprint in their minds important moral and religious lessons. These last will, even to little ones, invest the facts with dignity and also develop the moral sense latent in all children. This stage of teaching, not being hampered by the toil of learning to read, will produce most valuable results at a very early age.

The impression thus produced may be deepened and other benefits added, by asking children rather more advanced to reproduce in their own words the stories they have heard and the moral lessons they have learnt from them.

A further stage is to require our pupils to read the narratives aloud from the pages of the Bible; the eye thus taking the place of the ear as the channel of instruction. But, in all cases, reading should be supplemented by the living voice of the teacher, interpreting more fully to his pupils the sense already learnt from the printed page.

The immediate aim of all Bible teaching is to transfer to the memory of our pupils, as a permanent moral force, as much as we can of the contents of the sacred books; and so to expound them as to mould and raise their thoughts and hearts and lives. With this main purpose, other collateral benefits will follow. Our pupils will learn the habit of studying character, not only by personal acquaintance, but by the wider acquaintance stored up for us in books. The knowledge of the history of an ancient nation will give a conception of the significance of all history, ancient and modern, and of the correct method of historical research.

In all Bible teaching we must ever remember that in the Sacred Records we not only have a picture of Christ and true teaching about God, but that in that picture and teaching God Himself comes near to us, lays His hand upon us, and by His own presence reveals Himself to us as our Father and Saviour; that it is His prerogative to lift the veil which hides from mortal sight the things unseen; and that He will do this, through the pages of the Bible, to all who earnestly ask Him. The Book is itself the permanent and divinely-erected temple of revealed truth, the chosen means of preserving that truth in the Church, and of conveying it uncorrupted to all future ages. Even the Old Testament is, in 2 Tim. iii. 16, spoken of as *God-breathed*; and in Heb. x. 15 words from Jer. xxxi. 33 are quoted as a witness of the Holy Spirit. In the Bible, in a way surpassing all human intelligence, we see the face of Christ and hear the words of God.

This explains Matt. xi. 25, "I thank Thee, Father, . . . that Thou hast hidden these things from men wise and intelligent, and hast revealed them to babes;" and ch. xiii. 11, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given;" also Luke xxiv. 27, 32, 45, "He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. . . . He opened to us the Scriptures. . . . He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures." These mysteries, hidden under the surface of the Holy Scriptures, it is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to reveal; and the medium and condition of this revelation is a careful and devout study of the grammatical meaning of the words of the Bible. The Spirit gives insight into the spiritual significance of the words; and careful grammatical study guards against the vagaries into which devout men have sometimes fallen.

Such reverent study is a pre-requisite for all effective Bible teaching; and we must endeavour to inculcate in our pupils the same reverence and faith. We may thus direct them while young to a never-failing source of highest blessing.

We must also remember that for all our pupils Christ died; and that He now claims the definite self-surrender of each to Himself to be His servants. In no way can we do more to win for Christ the hearts of the young and to make them useful members of His Church than by setting before them the abundant teaching stored up in the Sacred Volume.

From the above will appear the many-sided benefit of Bible study. As containing vivid pictures of all sorts of men in all sorts of circumstances, it is intensely interesting. As presenting an impartial history of the most highly privileged nation of the ancient world, it encourages a study of the history of all ancient nations and of all history. As literature of very various kinds, it creates a taste for all literature, and thus opens a way to all kinds of culture. In the Sacred Book we learn about, and take hold of, those unseen realities which will abide when all else has passed away; we hear the voice and see the face and grasp the hand of Christ, and in Him we find salvation and rest.

All this we may impart, in much larger measure than at first sight appears, to the young, especially to those under our continuous charge. In so doing, we give them a taste of the pleasantness and profit of literature and of all human culture; and we teach them that all culture helps us to understand the things of God. We also teach them that matters sacred and secular are so closely interwoven, that whatever sheds light upon the one helps us to understand the other. We thus lay in youthful minds a foundation for a genuine Christian culture and for an intelligent Christian life.

JOSEPH AGAR BEET.

RICHMOND.

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